













**The Lotus Library**

**SALAMMBÔ**

THE  
**LOTUS LIBRARY**  
CONTAINS

French, German, and Russian Novels  
otherwise unobtainable in English

*Fcap. 8vo, top edge gilt, with bookmark, cloth gilt,  
1/6 net; leather, 2/- net.*

The Authors represented in "THE LOTUS  
LIBRARY" include

ANATOLE FRANCE  
ALPHONSE DAUDET  
HONORÉ DE BALZAC  
THÉOPHILE GAUTIER  
GUSTAVE FLAUBERT  
EMILE ZOLA  
VICTOR HUGO  
PIERRE LOTI  
LEO TOLSTOY  
EMILE GABORIAU  
AND OTHERS

---

WRITE FOR FULL LIST OF TITLES TO  
**GREENING AND CO.**  
**ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.**





*Gustave Flaubert*



# SALAMMBÔ

By  
GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Translated by  
J. W. MATTHEWS

With an Introduction by  
ARTHUR SYMONS

*SECOND EDITION*

LONDON : GREENING & CO.  
EMER STREET, STRAND, W.C.

**COPYRIGHT, 1909**

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	vii
I	
THE FEAST . . . . .	1
II	
AT SICCA . . . . .	26
III	
SALAMMBO . . . . .	55
IV	
BENEATH THE WALLS OF CARTHAGE . . . . .	66
V	
TANIT . . . . .	91
VI	
HANNO . . . . .	112
VII	
HAMILCAR BARCA . . . . .	140
VIII	
THE BATTLE OF THE MACAR . . . . .	192
IX	
IN THE FIELD . . . . .	218



# Contents

	X	PAGE
THE SERPENT . . . . .		239
	XI	
WITHIN THE TENT . . . . .		257
	XII	
THE AQUEDUCT . . . . .		283
	XIII	
MOLOCH . . . . .		311
	XIV	
THE DEFILE OF THE AXE . . . . .		361
	XV	
MATHO . . . . .		414
GLOSSARY . . . . .		427

## INTRODUCTION

**S***ALAMMBO* is an attempt, as Flaubert, himself his best critic, has told us, to "perpetuate a mirage by applying to antiquity the methods of the modern novel." By the modern novel he means the novel as he had reconstructed it; he means *Madame Bovary*. That perfect book is perfect because Flaubert had, for once, found exactly the subject suited to his method, had made his method and his subject one. On his scientific side Flaubert is a realist, but there is another, perhaps a more intimately personal side, on which he is lyrical, lyrical in a large, sweeping way. The lyric poet in him made *La Tentation de Saint Antoine*, the analyst made *L'Education Sentimentale*; but in *Madame Bovary* we find the analyst and the lyric poet in equilibrium. It is the history of a woman, as carefully observed as any story that has ever been written, and observed in surroundings of the most ordinary kind. But Flaubert finds the romantic material which he loved, the materials of beauty, in precisely that temperament which he studies so

## Salamambo

patiently and so cruelly. Madame Bovary is a little woman, half vulgar and half hysterical, incapable of a fine passion ; but her trivial desires, her futile aspirations after second-rate pleasures and second-hand ideals, give to Flaubert all that he wants : the opportunity to create beauty out of reality. What is common in the imagination of Madame Bovary becomes exquisite in Flaubert's rendering of it, and by that counterpoise of a commonness in the subject he is saved from any vague ascents of rhetoric in his rendering of it.

In writing *Salamambo* Flaubert set himself to renew the historical novel, as he had renewed the novel of manners. He would have admitted, doubtless, that perfect success in the historical novel is impossible, by the nature of the case. We are at best only half conscious of the reality of the things about us, only able to translate them approximately into any form of art. How much is left over, in the closest transcription of a mere line of houses in a street, of a passing steamer, of one's next-door neighbour, of the point of view, of a foreigner looking along Piccadilly, of one's own state of mind, moment by moment, as one walks from Oxford Circus to the Marble Arch? Think, then, of the attempt to reconstruct no matter what period of the past, to distinguish the

## Introduction

difference in the aspect of a world perhaps bossed with castles and ridged with ramparts, to two individualities encased within chain-armour ! Flaubert chose his antiquity wisely : a period of which we know too little to confuse us, a city of which no stone is left on another, the minds of Barbarians who have left us no psychological documents. "Be sure I have made no fantastic Carthage," he says proudly, pointing to his documents : Ammianus Marcellinus, who has furnished him with "the *exact* form of a door" ; the Bible and Theophrastus, from which he obtains his perfumes and his precious stones ; Gesenius, from whom he gets his Punic names ; the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions*. "As for the temple of Tanit, I am sure of having reconstructed it as it was, with the treatise of the Syrian Goddess, with the medals of the Duc de Lugnes, with what is known of the temple at Jerusalem, with a passage of St. Jerome, quoted by Selden (*De Diis Syriis*), with the plan of the temple of Gozzo, which is quite Carthaginian, and best of all, with the ruins of the temple of Thugga, which I have seen myself, with my own eyes, and of which no traveller or antiquarian, so far as I know, has ever spoken." But that, after all, as he admits (when, that is, he has proved point by point his minute accuracy to all that is known of ancient

## Salamambo

Carthage, his faithfulness to every indication which can serve for his guidance, his patience in grouping rather than his daring in the invention of action and detail), that is not the question. "I care little enough for archæology! If the colour is not uniform, if the details are out of keeping, if the manners do not spring from the religion and the actions from the passions, if the characters are not consistent, if the costumes are not appropriate to the habits and the architecture to the climate, if, in a word, there is not harmony, I am in error. If not, no."

And there, precisely, is the definition of the one merit which can give a historical novel the right to exist, and at the same time a definition of the merit which sets *Salamambo* above all other historical novels. Everything in the book is strange, some of it might easily be bewildering, some revolting; but all is in harmony. The harmony is like that of Eastern music, not immediately conveying its charm, or even the secret of its measure, to Western ears; but a monotony coiling perpetually upon itself, after a severe law of its own. Or rather, it is like a fresco, painted gravely in hard, definite colours, firmly detached from a background of burning sky; a procession of Barbarians, each in the costume of his country, passes across the wall; there are battles, in which elephants fight with men; an

## Introduction

army besieges a great city, or rots to death in a defile between mountains ; the ground is paved with dead men ; crosses, each bearing its living burden, stand against the sky ; a few figures of men and women appear again and again, expressing by their gestures the soul of the story.

Flaubert himself has pointed, with his unerring self-criticism, to the main defect of his book : " The pedestal is too large for the statue." There should have been, as he says, a hundred pages more about Salamambo. He declares : " There is not in my book an isolated or gratuitous description ; all are useful to my characters, and have an influence, near or remote, on the action." This is true, and yet, all the same, the pedestal is too large for the statue. Salamambo, " always surrounded with grave and exquisite things," has something of the somnambulism which enters into the heroism of Judith ; she has a hieratic beauty, and a consciousness as pale and vague as the moon whom she worships. She passes before us, " her body saturated with perfumes," encrusted with jewels like an idol, her head turreted with violet hair, the gold chain tinkling between her ankles ; and is hardly more than an attitude, a fixed gesture, like the Eastern women whom one sees passing, with oblique eyes and mouths painted into smiles, their faces curiously

## Salammbô

traced into a work of art, in the languid movements of a pantomimic dance. The soul behind those eyes? the temperament under that at times almost terrifying mask? Salammbô is as inarticulate for us as the serpent, to whose drowsy beauty, capable of such sudden awakenings, hers seems half akin; they move before us in a kind of hieratic pantomime, a coloured, expressive thing, signifying nothing. Matho, maddened with love, "in an invincible stupor, like those who have drunk some draught of which they are to die," has the same somnambulistic life; the prey of Venus, he has an almost literal insanity, which, as Flaubert reminds us, is true to the ancient view of that passion. He is the only quite vivid person in the book, and he lives with the intensity of a wild beast, a life "blinded alike" from every inner and outer interruption to one or two fixed ideas. The others have their places in the picture, fall into their attitudes naturally, remain so many coloured outlines for us. The illusion is perfect; these people may not be the real people of history, but at least they have no self-consciousness, no Christian tinge in their minds.

"The metaphors are few, the epithets ~~desolate~~," Flaubert tells us, of his style in this book, where, as he says, he has sacrificed less "to the ampli-

## Introduction

tude of the phrase and to the period," than in *Madame Bovary*. The movement here is in briefer steps, with a more earnest gravity, without any of the engaging weakness of adjectives. The style is never archaic, it is absolutely simple, the precise word being put always for the precise thing; but it obtains a dignity, a historical remoteness, by the large seriousness of its manner, the absence of modern ways of thought, which, in *Madame Bovary*, bring with them an instinctively modern cadence.

*Salamambo* is written with the severity of history, but Flaubert notes every detail visually, as a painter notes the details of natural things. A slave is being flogged under a tree: Flaubert notes the movement of the thong as it flies, and tells us: "The thongs, as they whistled through the air, sent the bark of the plane trees flying." Before the battle of the Macar, the Barbarians are awaiting the approach of the Carthaginian army. First "the Barbarians were surprised to see the ground undulate in the distance." Clouds of dust rise and whirl over the desert, through which are seen glimpses of horns, and, as it seems, wings. Are they bulls or birds, or a mirage of the desert? The Barbarians watch intently. "At last they made out several transverse bars, bristling with uniform points. The bars became denser, larger; dark mounds swayed from



## Salamambo

side to side ; suddenly square bushes came into view ; they were elephants and lances. A single shout, 'The Carthaginians !' arose." Observe how all that is seen, as if the eyes, unaided by the intelligence, had found out everything for themselves, taking in one indication after another, instinctively. Flaubert puts himself in the place of his characters, not so much to think for them as to see for them.

Compare the style of Flaubert in each of his books, and you will find that each book has its own rhythm, perfectly appropriate to its subject-matter. That style, which has almost every merit and hardly a fault, becomes what it is by a process very different from that of most writers careful of form. Read Chateaubriand, Gautier, even Baudelaire, and you will find that the aim of these writers has been to construct a style which shall be adaptable to every occasion, but without structural change ; the cadence is always the same. The most exquisite word-painting of Gautier can be translated rhythm for rhythm into English, without difficulty ; once you have mastered the tune, you have merely to go on ; every verse will be the same. But Flaubert is so difficult to translate because he has no fixed rhythm ; his prose keeps step with no regular march-music. He invents the rhythm of every sentence, he changes his cadence with every mood or for the convenience

## Introduction

of every fact. He has no theory of beauty in form apart from what it expresses. For him form is a living thing, the physical body of thought, which it clothes and interprets. "If I call stones blue, it is because blue is the precise word, believe me," he replies to Sainte-Beuve's criticism. Beauty comes into his words from the precision with which they express definite things, definite ideas, definite sensations. And in this book, where the material is so hard, apparently so unmalleable, it is a beauty of sheer exactitude which fills it from end to end, a beauty of measure and order, seen equally in the departure of the doves of Carthage, at the time of their flight into Sicily, and in the lions feasting on the corpses of the Barbarians, in the defile between the mountains.

•

ARTHUR SYMONS

**GUSTAVE FLAUBERT (1821-1880)**

**“Salammbô” (1862)**

# SALAMMBO

## I

### THE FEAST

**I**N the gardens of Hamilcar, at Megara, a suburb of Carthage, the soldiers whom he had commanded in Sicily were holding a great feast to celebrate the anniversary of the Battle of Eryx. The master was absent, their numbers were large, and accordingly they ate and drank in perfect freedom.

The officers, wearing buskins of bronze, had stationed themselves in the central alley beneath a purple awning fringed with gold, which stretched from the wall of the stables to the first terrace of the palace, while the rank and file were scattered beneath the trees. Here might be seen a number of flat-roofed buildings : wine-presses, cellars, store-houses, bakeries, and arsenals, together with a yard for the elephants, pits for wild animals, and a prison for slaves.

The kitchens were surrounded by fig trees ; a grove of sycamores stretched away to meet masses of verdure in which pomegranates shone brightly

## Salamambo

amid the white tufts of the cotton plant; vines laden with bunches were climbing among the branches of the pines; beneath the plane trees a field of roses was in bloom; here and there lilies nodded above the grass; the footpaths were strewn with black sand mingled with coral dust, and in the midst the avenue of cypresses formed, as it were, a double colonnade of green obelisks from end to end.

In the distant background the palace, built of Numidian marble mottled with yellow, reared its four terrace-like stories upon broad foundation courses. With its straight, massive staircase of ebony, every step bearing at each angle the prow of a vanquished galley, its red doors, each divided into quarters by a cross of black, its brazen trellis as a protection against scorpions below, and the lattice of gilded bars which closed its apertures above, it appeared to the soldiers, in its barbaric opulence, solemn and impenetrable as the countenance of Hamilcar.

The Council had assigned them his residence as the scene of their feast. Those who lay convalescent in the temple of Eschmoun, setting forth at dawn, had dragged themselves thither upon their crutches. Others kept arriving every minute, streaming ceaselessly forth from all the footpaths, like torrents pouring into a lake. Kitchen slaves, scared and half-naked, were seen running to and fro between the trees; the gazelles on the lawns fled bleating; the sun was setting, and the exhalation from the perspiring crowd was rendered heavier still by the perfume of the citron trees.

Among them were men of every nationality—

## The Feast

Ligurians, Lusitanians, inhabitants of the Balearic Islands, negroes, and fugitives from Rome. In close proximity to the drawling Doric patois one heard the sound of Celtic syllables rattling like chariots of war, while the terminations of Ionia clashed discordantly with consonants of the desert, harsh as a jackal's cry. The Greek was distinguishable by his slender figure, the Egyptian by his high shoulders, the Cantabrian by his ample calves. Proudly the Carian waved his helmet-plumes, archers from Cappadocia had painted great flowers on their bodies with the juices of herbs, and a few Lydians, clothed in women's garb, wore slippers and earrings as they ate their meal. Others, ostentatiously stained with vermilion, resembled statues of coral.

They stretched themselves on the cushions, ate squatting around great dishes, or else, lying on their stomachs, dragged portions of meat towards them, and resting on their elbows, took their fill in the peaceful attitude of lions dismembering their prey. Those who had been the last to arrive leaned against the trees, and watching the low tables half hidden beneath their scarlet coverings awaited their turn.

Hamilcar's kitchens being inadequate, the Council had sent them slaves, table service, and couches; and in the midst of the garden, as upon a battle-field when the dead are being burned, might be seen the blazing of great fires where oxen were roasting. Around baskets in gold filigree containing flowers, loaves, sprinkled with aniseed, were arranged alternately with cheeses heavier than hurling discs, goblets full of wine, and flagons of water. The

## Salamambo

delight of at last being able to eat as much as they chose in comfort made every eye dilate, and here and there songs began to arise.

First of all they were served with birds in green sauce on plates of red clay, embossed with designs in black, then with shell-fish of every kind that can be gathered on the Punic coasts, with porridge of wheat, pulse, and barley, and with snails seasoned with cumin on dishes of yellow amber.

Then the tables were covered with meat: antelopes with their horns, peacocks with their plumes, sheep boiled whole in sweet wine, haunches of she-camel and of buffalo, hedgehogs with garum, fried grasshoppers, and preserved dormice. In bowls made of wood from Tamrapanni great pieces of fat were floating in the midst of saffron. Everything was running over with pickles, truffles, and asafœtida. Pyramids of fruit fell in ruins over portions of honeycomb, nor had the purveyors overlooked a Carthaginian dish held in abhorrence by other nations—a few of the small, plump-bellied dogs with red, silky hair, which were fattened upon olive orts. Astonishment at novel forms of diet stimulated the lust of appetite. Gauls, their long hair piled upon the crowns of their heads, snatched the lemons and water-melons and crunched them up, rind and all. Negroes who had never seen a lobster tore their faces with their long red spines. Shaven Greeks, whiter than marble, cast the refuse of their plates behind them, while the shepherds of Brutium, clad in wolf skins, ate in greedy silence, burying their faces in their portions.

Night fell. The awning stretched above the

## The Feast

cypress avenue was withdrawn, and torches were brought. Perched in the cedar tops the monkeys sacred to the moon were frightened by the wavering light of the rock oil burning in vases of porphyry, and the cries they uttered excited the soldiers' mirth. Long, narrow flames flickered upon brazen breast-plates and scintillations of infinite variety flashed from dishes inlaid with precious stones. Bowls bordered with convex mirrors multiplied the reflections they enlarged, and the soldiers, crowding around them, gazed at their images with astonishment, and made grimaces to excite their own laughter. Golden stools and ivory spatulas were tossed from one to another across the tables. Open-throated they drank, in deep draughts, every variety of Greek wine, preserved in skins, the wines of Campania contained in jars, the wines of the Cantabrians, which were brought them in casks, and the wines made from the jujube tree, from cinnamon and from the lotus. Pools of wine rendered the ground slippery under foot. The reek of viands, rising amid the foliage, mingled with the vapour of their breath. At one and the same time you heard the clacking of jaws, the sounds of talking, of songs, and of cups, the crash of Campanian vases shattered into a thousand fragments, or the limpid note of a great silver dish.

And, with the increase of their intoxication the more vivid became their recollection of the injustice of Carthage. The Republic in fact, exhausted by the war, had allowed all the returning bands to collect in the town. Gisco, their general, had nevertheless been prudent enough to send them back one



## Salamambo

by one, in order to facilitate the payment of their due, and the Council had believed that they would ultimately consent to some diminution. Now, however, the very impossibility of paying them constituted a grievance against them. In the popular mind the debt was confused with the three thousand two hundred talents exacted by Lutatius, and consequently they, like Rome, were considered the foes of Carthage. This the Mercenaries understood; and their indignation vented itself accordingly in threats and outbreaks. Finally they demanded permission to assemble in order to celebrate one of their victories, and the peace party, revenging itself upon Hamilcar, who had done so much to support the war, gave way. Despite all his efforts it had come to a conclusion, so that having no longer any hope for Carthage he had handed over the control of the Mercenaries to Gisco. The choice of his palace for their reception would bring down upon him some portion of the hatred which was entertained for them. The expense, moreover, would inevitably be very heavy, and nearly the whole of it would be sustained by him.

Proud of having compelled the Republic to yield, the Mercenaries believed that at last they were about to return to their homes, bearing the price of their blood in the hoods of their cloaks. But viewed through the mists of intoxication their hardships seemed prodigious and but poorly requited. They showed each other their wounds, described the fights in which they had been engaged, their travels and the modes of hunting practised in their own countries, imitating the cries and the leaps of wild beasts.

## The Feast

Then followed disgusting wagers: heads were plunged in the amphoræ, and like thirsty dromedaries they drank on and on without intermission. Across the tables wandered a Lusitanian of gigantic stature carrying, with outstretched arms, a man in either hand, and belching fire from his nostrils. Lacedæmonians who had not laid aside their armour were leaping ponderously hither and thither. Some adopted a feminine gait and indulged in obscene gestures; others stripped themselves naked in order to fight like gladiators among the cups; a band of Greeks danced about a vase whereon nymphs were depicted, while a negro, with the bone of an ox, kept beating a brazen shield.

Suddenly they heard a plaintive song, a song at once powerful and sweet, which rose and fell upon the air like the beating of the wings of a wounded bird. It was the voice of the slaves in the ergastulum. Some of the soldiers, with the intention of setting them at liberty, leapt to their feet and disappeared. Returning, they drove before them, amid the dust and the shouting, a score of men distinguishable by the pallor of their faces. Little cone-shaped caps of black felt covered their shaven heads; they all wore wooden sandals, and moved with a clatter of old iron like chariots on the march.

On reaching the cypress avenue they were lost amid the questioning crowd. One, however, remained standing apart. His shoulders, marked with long scars, were visible through the rents in his tunic. Lowering his chin he looked mistrustfully around, slightly closing his eyelids beneath the glare of the torches; but when he perceived that of all

## Salamambo

those armed men there was not one who wished him harm, a great sigh escaped from his bosom; he stammered and laughed foolishly amid the bright tears which bathed his face; then, seizing a brimming cantharus by the rings, he raised it aloft to the full length of his chain-laden arms, and looking up to heaven, still grasping the cup, said—

“Hail first of all to thee, Baal-Eschmoun the deliverer, to my countrymen known as Æsculapius! To you, ye genii of the springs, the sunlight, and the woods! To you, ye gods, hidden beneath the mountains and in the caves of the earth! And to you, ye strong men in glittering armour, who have wrought my deliverance!”

Then, letting the cup fall, he told his story. He was called Spendius, and had been captured by the Carthaginians at the Battle of Arginusæ. Speaking Greek, Ligurian, and Phœnician, he thanked the Mercenaries once again, kissed their hands, and finally congratulated them upon the banquet, marvelling, at the same time, that he did not perceive the cups of the Sacred Legion. These cups, which bore an emerald vine on each of their six golden faces, belonged to a body of troops composed exclusively of young patricians of the loftiest stature. This was a privilege, amounting almost to a sacerdotal distinction, wherefore nothing among the treasures of the Republic was more coveted by the Mercenaries. For this reason they detested the Legion, while for the unimaginable pleasure of drinking from the cups some had been known to risk their lives.

Accordingly they gave orders that the cups should

## The Feast

be brought. They were in charge of the Syssitia or corporations of merchants, who ate in common. The slaves returned; at this hour all members of the Syssitia were asleep.

"Wake them up!" the Mercenaries replied.

When a second effort had been made it was explained to them that the cups were locked up in a temple.

"Let it be opened!" they answered.

And when the slaves had confessed with trembling that they were in the hands of Gisco, the general, they shouted—

"Let him bring them!"

Ere long Gisco appeared at the end of the garden amid an escort of the Sacred Legion. From a distance, his ample black cloak, which was retained upon his head by a golden mitre starred with precious stones and hung down all round him to the very hoofs of his horse, was merged in the hue of the darkness. Nothing could be distinguished save his white beard, the lustre of his head-piece, and the threefold collar of large blue plates of metal which danced upon his breast.

As he entered, the soldiers saluted him with great acclamation, everyone shouting—

"The cups! The cups!"

• He began by declaring that so far as their courage was concerned they were worthy to use them, and the crowd, applauding, yelled with joy. Well might he know it, who had led them to battle in a distant land and had himself returned with the last cohort upon the last galley!

• "It is true!" they said. "It is true!"

## Salamambo

At the same time, continued Gisco, the Republic had paid respect to the distinctions, between them in respect of nationality, to their customs, and to their forms of worship; in Carthage they were free! As for the vessels of the Sacred Legion, they were private property.

Suddenly a Gaul, close to Spendius, leapt across the tables and ran straight to Gisco, threatening him and brandishing a couple of naked swords.

Without pausing in his speech, the general struck him across the head with his heavy staff of ivory.

The Barbarian fell. The Gauls uttered a yell, and their wrath, spreading to the others, threatened to carry the legionaries away. Gisco, seeing them grow pale, shrugged his shoulders. He reflected that against these brute beasts, exasperated as they were, his courage would avail nothing. It were better to take vengeance later by means of some ruse; accordingly he gave his soldiers the signal and slowly withdrew. Then, turning round in the gateway, he shouted to the Mercenaries that they would repent it.

The feast began afresh. But Gisco might return and surround the suburb which adjoined the outermost ramparts, thereby crushing them against the walls. Then, in spite of their numbers, they felt themselves alone; and all at once the great town, slumbering beneath them in the gloom, with its accumulation of stairways, its tall dark houses, and its shadowy gods, more savage even than its populace, filled them with dread. In the distance a few ships' lanterns were gliding about the harbour, and there were lights in the temple of Khamon.

## The Feast

They bethought themselves of Hāmilcar. Where was he? Why had he deserted them on the conclusion of peace? Doubtless his differences with the Council were a mere device to their undoing. Unappeased, their hatred recoiled upon him; they cursed him, exasperating each other by their own anger. Just at that moment a crowd collected beneath the plane trees, to see a negro who was wallowing on the ground, beating it with his limbs, his eyeballs fixed, his neck contorted, and foam upon his lips. Someone cried out that he was poisoned. Straightway all believed themselves poisoned. They fell upon the slaves; a frightful clamour arose, and a frenzy of destruction swept like a whirlwind over the intoxicated army. They laid about them at random, they smashed, they slew; some hurled torches into the foliage, others, leaning on the balustrade of the lions' pit, slaughtered them with arrows, while the boldest ran to the elephants, with the intention of cutting off their trunks and destroying the ivory.

Meanwhile, some Balearic slingers, who had turned the corner of the palace in order to loot with less restraint, were brought to a standstill by a lofty barrier of rattan. Cutting the thongs of the lock with their daggers, they found themselves beneath the façade which looked towards Carthage, in another garden crowded with pruned shrubs. Lines of white flowers, all exactly corresponding with one another, formed long parabolas like shooting-stars on the azure-tinted soil. The bushes, mysteriously dark, gave out warm, honeyed odours. There were tree-trunks smeared with vermillion, like

## Salamambo

pillars stained with blood. In the middle were twelve copper pedestals, each supporting a large glass ball--hollow globes filled with uncertain gleams of reddish light, like huge eyeballs which had not yet ceased to palpitate. The soldiers lit the way with torches, stumbling nevertheless on the sloping ground, which had been deeply cultivated.

But they caught sight of a small lake, divided into several basins by walls of blue stone. So limpid was the water that the flames of the torches quivered to its very depths upon a bed of white pebbles and gold dust. It began to bubble, bright points of light shot to and fro, and great fishes, with gems about their mouths, appeared near the surface.

Laughing gaily, the soldiers thrust their fingers into the fishes' gills and carried them to the tables. They were the fish of the house of Barea, and were all descended from the original lotes which had hatched the mystic egg wherein the Goddess lay concealed. With the idea of committing sacrilege the gluttony of the Mercenaries revived; they speedily placed fire beneath vessels of brass, and amused themselves by watching the struggles of the beautiful fish in the simmering water.

Surging together, the soldiers swept one another forward. They were no longer afraid, and began to drink afresh. The perfumes which dripped from their foreheads bedewed their ragged tunics with great drops; the tables seemed to them to rock like vessels, and leaning upon them with both fists, they glared around them with great tipsy eyes, that their gaze might devour what they could not carry

## The Feast

away. Others, stalking across the purple cloths in the very midst of the dishes, kicked to pieces the ivory stools and Tyrian phials of glass. Songs mingled with the death-rattle of slaves expiring among the broken cups. They called for wine, meat, and gold; they shouted for women; they raved in a hundred languages. Some, from the mist which floated around them, deemed themselves in the vapour baths; or else, their attention being caught by the foliage, fancied they were hunting, and ran upon their comrades as upon wild beasts. The conflagration spread from tree to tree until all were on fire, and from the lofty masses of verdure long white spirals rolled upwards as though they had been volcanoes bursting into smoke. The clamour increased, and the wounded lions roared in the darkness.

All at once the palace was lighted up even to its topmost terrace. The central door opened, and a woman, the daughter of Hamilcar herself, clothed in garments of black, appeared upon the threshold. She descended the first staircase, which ran diagonally across the front of the first story, then the second, and then the third, coming to a halt upon the last terrace, on a level with the staircase of the galleys. Motionless, with head bent, she looked upon the soldiers.

Behind her, on either side, were ranged two long processions of pale men, whose white robes, fringed with gold, fell straight down to their feet. They had no beard, no hair, no eyebrows. In their hands, glittering with rings, they carried huge lyres, and all, with shrill voices, were singing a hymn to



## Salamambo

the divinity of Carthage. These were the eunuch priests of the temple of Tanit, whom Salamambo often summoned to her house.

At last she descended the staircase of the galleys. The priests followed her. She advanced into the cypress avenue, walking slowly between the tables of the captains, who fell back slightly as they watched her pass.

Her hair, sprinkled with violet sand and gathered into a lofty coil after the fashion of Canaanite maidens, increased her apparent stature. Braids of pearls fastened to her temples fell down to the corners of a mouth rosy as a half-opened pomegranate. On her bosom lay a collection of luminous stones resembling, in their medley of colour, the scales of the muræna. Her sleeveless tunic, starred with red flowers upon a ground of deep black, revealed her bare arms, adorned with diamonds. Between her ankles she wore a slender chain of gold to regulate her steps, and her great mantle of dark purple, fashioned of an unknown material, trailed behind her, forming with every step, as it were, a broad, pursuing wave. From time to time the priests struck muffled chords upon their lyres, and in the intervals of the music could be heard the clink of the little golden chain, together with the measured tapping of her sandals of papyrus.

As yet no one was acquainted with her. It was known merely that she led a retired life in the practice of pious observances. Soldiers had seen her at night, on the roof of her palace, kneeling beneath the stars amid the curling fumes of lighted brasiers. Her eyes seemed fixed upon the remotest

## The Feast

distance, beyond the confines of earth. She walked with bowed head, holding a little lyre of ebony in her right hand.

"Dead! All dead!" they heard her murmur. "No more will you come in obedience to my voice, as you did when, seated on the brink of the lake, I used to toss melon-pips into your mouths! In your eyes, more limpid than the crystal drops of streams, lurked the mystery of Tanit." And she called them by their names, which were those of the months: "Siv! Sivan! Tammouz, Eloul, Tischri, Schebar! Ah, have pity on me, Goddess!"

The soldiers, without understanding what she said, gathered around her. They were amazed at her attire; but she cast about her a lingering, frightened look; then, letting her head sink between her shoulders and thrusting out her arms, she repeated several times—

"What have you done! What have you done! You had for your entertainment bread, meat, oil, and all the malobathrum in our granaries! I had sent to Hecatompilos for cattle; I had despatched hunters into the desert!" Her voice grew louder; her cheeks flushed crimson. "What then," she pursued, "is this place where you are? Are you in a conquered town or in the palace of a master? And of what master? Hamilcar the Suffete, my father, the servant of the Baals! He it was who denied Lutatius the aid of your weapons, now red with the blood of his slaves! Know you, in your own lands, of one better skilled to command in battle? See!" The steps of our palace are crowded with trophies of victory! Stay not your

## Salamambo

hands! Burn it! I will carry away with me the Genius of my house, my black serpent sleeping above there on leaves of lotus! I will whistle, he will follow; and if I embark on a galley he will glide on the foam of the waves in my vessel's wake."

Her delicate nostrils quivered; she crushed her finger-nails against the gems upon her breast. Her eyes grew languid, and she continued —

"Ah, poor Carthage! How art thou to be pitied! No longer hast thou, to defend thee, the strong men of olden time who crossed the oceans to build temples on their shores. The nations around thee toiled in industry, and on the plains of the sea, furrowed by thy oars, thy harvests rose and fell."

Then she began to sing the adventures of Melkarth, the god of the Sidonians and the father of her family. She told of the ascent of the mountains of Ersiphonia, of the journey to Tartessus, and the war against Masisabal to avenge the queen of the serpents.

"Into the forest he followed the female monster, whose tail wound its way over the dead leaves with the meanderings of a silver brook, till he came to a mead where women, with the haunches of dragons, stood erect upon the ends of their tails about a great fire. Blood-red shone the moon in a circle of pale light, and their scarlet tongues, cloven like a fisherman's harpoon, stretched curving forth to the very edge of the flame."

Then, without pausing, Salamambo told how Melkarth, having vanquished Masisabal, placed her severed head on his vessel's prow. "With the shock of each wave it was buried beneath the foam; but

## The Feast

embalmed by the sun it became harder than gold ; yet the eyes never ceased their weeping, and their tears fell perpetually into the sea."

She chanted it all in an old Canaanite idiom, which the Barbarians did not understand. They asked each other what she could be saying to them in a speech accompanied by gestures so terrible, and, mounted around her on tables, on couches, and on branches of the sycamores, open-mouthed and craning forward, they tried to grasp the dim legends which wavered before their imagination through the mists of theogonies like phantoms in the clouds.

The beardless priests alone understood Salammbo. Feebler than aged women they trembled at once from mystic emotion and from the fear with which men inspired them, and their wrinkled hands shook as they hovered over the strings of their lyres, whereon from time to time they struck a melancholy chord. But the Barbarians paid them no heed ; their ears were ever strained to catch the maiden's song.

None gazed upon her like a young Numidian chief, who had a seat beside the tables of the captains among soldiers of his own country. His belt so bristled with darts that it formed a protuberance in his ample cloak, which was bound to his temples by a leathern thong. Opening widely across his shoulders the fabric shrouded his features in gloom, leaving nothing visible save the gleam of his steadfast eyes. It was by chance that he was present at the feast, being a resident with the family of Barca by his father's desire, in accordance with the custom of princes who placed their children with great families in order to pave the way for alliances ; but

## Salamambo

during the six months that he had dwelt among them, Narr' Havas had not yet had a glimpse of Salamambo ; and, seated upon his heels, with his beard drooping towards the hafts of his daggers, he surveyed her with swelling nostrils, like a leopard crouching among the bamboos.

On the opposite side of the tables stood a Libyan of colossal stature, with short, dark, curling hair. He had retained nothing but his military jacket, which tore the purple covering of the couch with its plates of brass. A necklace with a silver crescent was entangled in the hair of his chest. His face was smirched with spots of blood, he was leaning upon his left elbow and smiling broadly with open mouth.

Salamambo no longer chanted her sacred rhythm. With a woman's delicate tact she employed simultaneously all the idioms spoken by the Barbarians in order to soften their anger. To the Greeks she spoke Greck ; then she addressed herself to the Ligurians, to the Campanians, to the Negroes ; and each one, as he listened, recognised in that voice the music of his native land. Now, carried away by memories of Carthage, she won their applause by celebrating her ancient battles against Rome. The gleam of their naked swords aroused her to passion ; she cried aloud with outstretched arms. Then her lyre fell ; she became silept, and pressing both hands upon her heart, remained for some minutes with eyelids closed, thrilled by the emotion of the men who thronged about her . . .

Matho the Libyan leaned over towards her. Involuntarily she approached him, and impelled by a consciousness of his pride, sought to make peace

## The Feast

with the army by pouring out for him into a golden cup a long stream of wine.

"Drink!" she said.

He took the cup, and was raising it to his lips when a Gaul, the same whom Gisco had injured, clapped him on the shoulder, jesting at the same time with a jovial air in his native tongue. Spendius, who was close at hand, offered to interpret.

"Say on!" said Matho.

"The Gods protect you; you are about to become rich. When are the nuptials?"

"What nuptials?"

"Your own! For with us," said the Gaul, "when a woman gives a soldier drink, it means that she offers him her couch."

Scarcely had he finished speaking when Narr' Havas, springing to his feet, snatched a javelin from his belt, and bracing his right foot against the edge of the table hurled it at Matho. Whizzing between the cups, the weapon pierced the Libyan's arm, pinning it so firmly to the cloth that the handle quivered in the air.

Matho promptly plucked it out, but he was unarmed and unclothed; at length, lifting the heavily laden table with both hands, he flung it at Narr' Havas into the very midst of the crowd which rushed between them. Soldiers and Numidians pressed so closely upon one another that they could not draw their swords. Matho forced a passage by dint of heavy blows with his head. When he raised it Narr' Havas had disappeared, and he cast his eyes around in search of him. Salammbo, too, was gone.

## Salamambo

Then, as his glance reached the palace, he discerned at the very top the red door with the cross of black in the act of closing. He sprang forward.

He was seen running between the prows of the galleys ; then again he was in sight throughout the length of the three staircases till he reached the red door and flung himself bodily against it. Panting, he leaned against the wall to keep himself from falling.

A man had followed him, and through the gloom, for the lights of the banquet were shut out by the corner of the palace, he recognised Spendius.

"Away !" he said.

The slave, without replying, began to tear his tunic with his teeth ; then, kneeling beside Matho, he took hold of his arm very gently and felt for the injured place in the darkness.

By a gleam from the moon, then sailing through the clouds, Spendius discerned a gaping wound in the middle of the arm. He bound the fragment of cloth about it ; but the other, becoming irritated, said, "Leave me ! Leave me !"

"Ah, no !" replied the slave. "You released me from the ergastulum ; I am yours ! You are my master ! Command me !"

Matho, keeping close to the walls, made the tour of the terrace, straining his ears at every step, and plunging his gaze into the silent apartments through the interstices of the gilded rods. At last he halted with an air of despair.

"Listen !" said the slave. "Oh, despise me not because I am weak ! I have lived in the palace. I can glide like a viper between the walls. Come !

## The Feast

In the Hall of the Ancestors there lies an ingot of gold beneath every stone, and a subterranean passage leads to their tombs."

"What of that?" said Matho.

Spendius was silent.

They were upon the terrace. Before them stretched a mighty expanse of shadow, wherein vague masses seemed heaped together, like the gigantic billows of a dark and petrified ocean.

But a luminous bar shot aloft from the east. Far below, to the left, the canals of Megara began to cleave the verdure of the gardens with sinuous streaks of white. Little by little the conical roofs of the heptagonal temples, the flights of steps, the terraces, the ramparts, stood out against the pale sky of dawn; and all about the peninsula of Carthage there rose and fell a girdle of white foam, while the emerald sea lay, as it seemed, congealed in the chill air of morning. Then as the expanse of rosy sky grew larger and larger the tall houses, leaning over the declivities of the ground, reared and massed themselves like a flock of goats coming down from the mountains. The streets lay deserted before them; no movement was visible in the palm trees that sprang here and there from the walls; the full cisterns looked like silver bucklers lost in the courts; the beacon on the promontory of Hermæum was beginning to grow pale. In the cypress grove on the summit of the Acropolis the horses of Eschmouff, sensible that daylight was at hand, planted their hoofs on the marble parapet and neighed towards the sun. It arose, and Spendius flung his arms aloft with a shout.



## Salamambo

Everything was astir and bathed in ruddy light, for the God, as though tearing himself asunder, poured forth upon Carthage, with the full power of his rays, the golden rain from his veins. The beaks of the galleys sparkled, the roof of Khamon seemed aflame, the doors of the temples were opening and gleams of light might be discerned within. Over the flagstones rolled the wheels of great waggons from the country. Dromedaries, laden with baggage, were making the descent of the declivities; at the crossways money-changers were putting up the awnings above their shops; storks were taking wing, and white sails fluttering. The tabor of the sacred courtesans sounded in the grove of Tanit, and the furnaces for baking clay coffins were beginning to smoke on the promontory beyond the Mappalia. Spendius leaned outwards from the terrace, his teeth chattering.

"Ah! Yes, master—yes!" he repeated. "I understand why you scorned just now to plunder the house."

Matho was awakened, as it were, by the sibillation of his voice. He did not appear to comprehend, and Spendius resumed—

"Ah, what wealth! And those who possess it have not even the steel wherewith to defend it!"

Then, extending his right hand to indicate where a few of the inhabitants were creeping on the sand beyond the mole in search of gold dust—

"See!" he said. "The Republic is like those wretched creatures: stooping on the margin of the ocean, she digs her greedy arms into every shore, and the sound of the waves so fills her ears that

## The Feast

the tread of a master coming behind would never be heard!"

He drew Matho to the other end of the terrace, and showed him the garden where the swords of the soldiers, hanging among the trees, were flashing in the sun.

"But here there are strong men whose hatred is aflame! And nothing binds them to Carthage: neither their families, nor their oaths, nor their Gods!"

Matho remained leaning against the wall, and Spendius, drawing near, continued in a low voice—

"Do you follow me, soldier? We should go clothed in purple like satraps. We should bathe in perfumes; I in my turn should own slaves! Are you not weary of sleeping on the hard ground, of the hardships of camp life, and of the perpetual sound of the trumpet? Later, you think, your time of rest will come! Yes, when they pluck off your breastplate to throw your body to the vultures! Or when, perchance, leaning on a staff, blind, lame and feeble, you slink from door to door to tell the story of your youth to brine-sellers and little children. Think of all the unjust treatment you have received from your commanders, of the bivouacs in the snow, the marches in the sun, the tyrannies of discipline, and the perpetual menace of the cross! And after all your suffering they have given you a necklace of honour, just as they hang a string of bells to a donkey's chest to deafen it on its journey and to make it insensible to fatigue. A man like you, braver than Pyrrhus! Yet had you been willing! Ah, how happy you will be in

## Salamambo

the great cool halls, soothed by the lyre, reclining on flowers, with your jesters and your women! Tell me not that the enterprise is impossible! Have not the Mercenaries already had possession of Rheggium and of other strongholds in Italy? Who hinders you? Hamilcar is away; the Rich are abhorred by the populace; with the cowards about him Gisco can do nothing. But you, you are brave! You they will obey! Command them! Carthage is ours; let us fall upon it!"

"No," said Matho; "the curse of Moloch is heavy upon me. I felt it in her eyes, and just now I saw a black ram shrinking back within a temple." Looking around him, he added, "Where is she?"

Spendius understood that he was a prey to intense uneasiness, and did not dare to say more.

The trees behind them were smoking still; from the calcined branches the carcasses of apes, half-consumed, dropped now and again among the dishes. Drunken soldiers snored, open-mouthed, beside the corpses; those who were not asleep bent their heads to avoid the dazzling sunlight. The trampled soil was hidden by crimson pools. The elephants waved their bleeding trunks between the piles of their enclosures. Sacks of wheat could be seen spilt about the open granaries, and beneath the gateway was a dense row of chariots, packed together by the Barbarians. The peacocks perched in the cedars spread their tails and began to scream.

Spendius, however, was amazed at Matho's stillness; paler even than before, he was leaning with both fists upon the parapet of the terrace, and

## The Feast

following something on the horizon with fixed and steadfast eyes. Leaning forward, Spendius at last discovered the object of his gaze. A golden speck was revolving amid the dust far away on the road to Utica ; it was the nave of a chariot drawn by a pair of mules ; a slave, running in front of the pole, was holding them by the bridle, and within the chariot two women were seated. The animals' manes, covered by a network of blue pearls, stood erect in the Persian fashion between their ears. Spendius, recognising them, restrained a cry.

A large veil was floating behind them in the wind.

## II

### AT SICCA

**T**WO days later the Mercenaries withdrew from Carthage. On condition that they would go to Sicca and encamp there, each of them had been presented with a piece of gold. Every kind of blandishment had been lavished upon them.

"You are the saviours," they were told, "of Carthage! But if you remained here the town would starve; she would become bankrupt. Withdraw, and at a later opportunity the Republic will show her gratitude for your compliance. We are going to levy taxes forthwith, your pay will be discharged in full, and galleys will be fitted out to carry you back to your own countries."

To all this speech-making they knew not what to reply. Inured to war, they found town-life a burden, they were convinced without much difficulty, and the populace ascended the walls to watch their departure.

They streamed out, a disorderly array, through the street of Khamon and the gate of Cirta, archers mingling with heavy infantry, captains with the rank and file, Lusitanians with Greeks, marching with a jaunty step, and making their heavy boots clank upon the flagstones. Their armour was dented by

## At Sicca

catapults, their faces blackened by the fierce heat of battle. Hoarse cries issued from their thick beards ; their torn coats of mail smote against their sword-hilts ; their naked limbs, terrible as engines of war, were visible through the meshes of brass. Lance, battle-axe and spear, caps of felt and helmets of bronze, all swayed together in uniform motion. The streets were packed with them as though the walls must crack, and the long mass of soldiers under arms filled the entire space between the six-storied houses, coated with bitumen. Behind their lattices of iron or of reeds the women, with veiled heads, silently watched the Barbarians pass.

Roofs, walls, and fortifications were hidden beneath the Carthaginian crowds clothed in garments of black. The vests of the sailors formed, as it were, spots of blood among the sombre multitude ; and children, all but naked, their skin gleaming beneath their copper bracelets, waved their arms amid the foliage on the columns or between the branches of the palms. A few of the Ancients had stationed themselves on the platforms of the towers, and none could understand how it was that here and there these individuals with their long beards should be standing thus in a contemplative attitude. Each was visible from afar against the background of the sky, vague as a phantom, motionless as a stone.

All, however, were oppressed by the same anxiety ; they feared lest the Barbarians, realising their power, should take it into their heads to remain. But they took their departure so unsuspectingly that the Carthaginians grew bold, and mingling with the

## Salamambo

soldiers, overwhelmed them with protestations and embraces. Some from exaggerated cunning and very impudence of hypocrisy urged them, even, not to leave the town. They threw them perfumes, flowers, and pieces of money. They gave them charms against sickness--but they had spat upon them thrice in order to bring death, or enclosed within them the hair of the jackal, which renders men faint-hearted. Aloud they invoked the favour of Melkarth, and beneath their breath his curse.

Then came the medley of baggage, beasts of burden and stragglers. There were sick men borne, groaning, on dromedaries, and others, limping, who leaned upon the handle of a spear. The tipplers carried skins of wine; the greedy bore quarters of meat, cakes, fruit, butter wrapped in fig leaves, and snow in linen bags. Some were seen with sunshades in their hands and paroquets upon their shoulders; some were followed by dogs, gazelles, or panthers. Women of Libyan nationality, riding on donkeys, reviled the negresses who had forsaken the brothels of Malqua to follow the soldiers; several were suckling infants slung to their breasts by leather thongs. The mules, goaded onwards with sword-points, bent their backs under the weight of the tents, and there was a swarm of menials and water-carriers, the scum of the lower classes of Carthage, wan, yellow with fever and filthy, with vermin, who had attached themselves to the Barbarians.

When they had all passed by, the gates were closed behind them, but the people did not quit the walls. The army soon spread itself over the entire

## At Sicca

breadth of the isthmus. It separated into unequal masses ; then the lances appeared like tall bents of grass, and finally everything was lost in a long cloud of dust. Those of the soldiers who turned their faces towards Carthage saw nothing but her long walls, their bare battlements standing out against the sky-line.

Then the Barbarians heard a great cry. They supposed that some of their comrades—for they did not know their own numbers—had remained behind in the town, and were amusing themselves by plundering a temple. The idea excited much laughter, and they proceeded on their way.

They were delighted to find themselves once more, as of old, marching all together through the open country, and the Greeks sang the ancient song of the Mamertines —

“With my lance and my sword I plough and I reap ; I am the ruler of the house ! Disarmed, my enemy falls at my feet, calling me Lord and Great King.”

They shouted and leapt ; the merriest began to tell stories ; the season of hardships was at an end. On reaching Tunis some observed that a troop of Balearic slingers was missing. They could not be far away, and no one gave them another thought.

Some went to lodge in the houses, the rest encamped at the foot of the walls, and the townspeople came out to chat with the soldiers.

Throughout the night there were glimpses of fires burning on the horizon in the direction of Carthage, gleams which like giant torches stretched forth across the motionless lake. No one in the army could tell what festival was being celebrated.



## Salamambo

On the following day the Barbarians passed through a district the whole of which was under cultivation. Beside the road lay a succession of farms belonging to the patricians ; channels of water were flowing through groves of palm trees ; pink mists floated in the gorges between the hills ; blue mountains arose in the background. A warm wind was blowing, and chameleons were crawling over the broad leaves of the cactus plants.

The Barbarians now travelled more slowly. They journeyed in isolated detachments or lagged behind one another at long intervals. They ate the grapes on the borders of the vineyards. Stretched upon the grass, they gazed in astonishment at the great horns of the oxen, twisted by artificial means, the sheep clothed in skins to protect their wool, the intersecting furrows which divided the land into diamond-shaped sections, the ploughshares like anchors of vessels, and the pomegranate trees which were watered with silphium. The luxuriance of the soil, together with these products of inventive sagacity, filled them with amazement.

At night they stretched themselves on the still folded tents, and as they fell asleep, with faces upturned to the stars, they regretted Hamilcar's feast.

About noon of the following day they came to a halt on the bank of a river among masses of oleanders. Lances, shields, and helmets were promptly thrown aside. They washed themselves, shouting the while ; they drew water in their helmets or drank lying flat on their faces among the beasts of burden, whose loads were falling from their backs.

## At Sicca

Spendius, mounted on a dromedary stolen from Hamilcar's stockyards, caught a distant glimpse of Matho, who, bareheaded and with downcast face, his arm slung upon his breast and his eyes fixed on the flowing stream, was watering his mule. Forthwith he hurried through the crowd, calling after him, "Master! Master!"

Matho scarcely thanked him for his expressions of goodwill, but Spendius, taking no notice, fell into line behind him, casting from time to time an anxious glance towards Carthage.

The son of a Greek rhetor and a Campanian prostitute, he had at first grown rich by selling women; then, ruined by a shipwreck, he had served with the shepherds of Samnium in the war against the Romans. Captured, he had escaped; had been taken again, and had laboured in the quarries, panted in the baths, shrieked under torture, passed through the hands of many masters, and experienced every form of violence. At last, in despair, he had flung himself into the sea from the trireme in which he laboured at the oar. Picked up, half dead, by some of Hamilcar's sailors, he had been brought to Carthage and placed in the ergastulum at Megara. But since deserters had to be restored to the Romans, he had taken advantage of the uproar to make his escape with the soldiers.

Throughout the journey he remained close to Matho, he brought him food, assisted him to dismount, and at night spread a rug beneath his head. Touched at last by these attentions, little by little Matho unlocked his lips.

He had been born in the Gulf of Syrtis. His

## Salamambo

father had taken him on a pilgrimage to the temple of Ammon; then he had hunted elephants in the forests of the Garamantes; had subsequently enlisted in the service of Carthage, and upon the capture of Drepanum had been appointed tetrarch. The Republic owed him four horses, twenty-three Greek bushels of wheat, and a winter's pay. He feared the Gods, and hoped to die in his own country.

Spendius talked to him of his travels and of the peoples and the temples he had visited. Spendius knew many things: he could make sandals, boarspears, and nets; could tame wild animals and cook fish. At times he stopped short in his speech, and a hoarse cry issued from the depths of his throat; Matho's mule quickened its pace, and the others hastened after them. Then Spendius began afresh, though still shaken with distress, which subsided, however, by the evening of the fourth day.

They were walking side by side, to the right of the army, on the slope of a hill; below stretched the plain, lost in the mists of night. The lines of soldiers, filing onward beneath them, rose and fell in the darkness. Now and again, as they passed over moonlit stretches of rising ground, a star would quiver on the spear-points, the helmets glittered an instant, and all relapsed into darkness, whence others presently emerged, and yet others, continually. The awakened flocks bleated in the distance, and an infinite softness, as it were, seemed to settle down upon the earth. " "

Spendius, his head thrown back and his eyes half closed, drank in the coolness of the breeze in deep

## At Sicca

breaths, spreading out his arms and moving his fingers the better to feel the caress which stole over his frame. He was uplifted by returning hopes of vengeance. He pressed his hand upon his mouth in order to restrain his sobs, and, faint with rapture, dropped the halter of his dromedary, which pursued its way with long, regular steps. Matho had relapsed into his melancholy; his legs hung down to the ground, and the stalks of grass brushed against his cothurni with a ceaseless rustling sound.

Meanwhile the road stretched endlessly before them. At the extremity of a plain they always reached a circular plateau, and again descended into a valley; and as they approached them the mountains, which seemed to close the horizon, glided, as it were, from their places. Now and again a river appeared among the foliage of the tamarisks, only to lose itself at the bend of the hills. At times there rose before them a huge rock, like the prow of a vessel or the pedestal of some vanished colossus.

At regular intervals they came to small quadrangular temples, used as halting-places for pilgrims on the way to Sicca. They were closed like tombs. The Libyans thundered at the doors to obtain entrance, but there was no response from within.

Then the plots of cultivated land grew rarer, and quite abruptly they came upon stretches of sand bristling with masses of prickly shrubs. Flocks of sheep were browsing among the stones, kept by a woman girt about the waist with a blue fleece. At the first glimpse of the soldiers' spears between the rocks she fled, shrieking.

While marching through a kind of huge corridor

## Salamambo

between two chains of low, reddish-coloured hills their nostrils were assailed by a most offensive odour, and something unusual was apparently discernible high up in a carob tree : above the leaves there rose a lion's head.

Hastening towards it, they found a lion, fastened by the four limbs to a cross, like a criminal. His huge muzzle hung down upon his chest, and his fore paws, half hidden by his abundant mane, were spread out like the wings of a bird. His ribs, individually distinct, stood out beneath his tense skin ; his hind legs, nailed one upon the other, were slightly raised ; and stalactites of dark blood which had run down among the hair had gathered at the end of his tail, which hung straight down to the full length of the cross.

The soldiers made merry around him, calling him consul and Roman citizen, and throwing pebbles into his eyes to drive away the gnats.

A hundred paces farther on they saw two others, then, quite suddenly, there came into sight a long row of crosses, each supporting a lion. Some had been dead so long that nothing now remained attached to the wood save the fragments of their skeletons ; others, half eaten away, had their jaws distorted in a frightful grimace ; some were of enormous size ; the post of the cross had bent beneath them so that they swayed in the wind, while flocks of ravens wheeled ceaselessly in the air above their heads. Thus did the Carthaginian peasants avenge themselves when they had captured some savage animal, hoping by such an example to inspire the others with terror. The Barbarians, laughing

## At Sicca

no longer, remained lost in amazement. "What kind of a race is this," they thought, "which finds its amusement in crucifying lions?"

Moreover, they were now, and especially the men from the north, oppressed by a vague uneasiness, perturbed, already ailing. They tore their hands with the barbs of the aloes; great mosquitoes hummed in their ears; the army was beginning to suffer from dysentery. They were wearying for a sight of Sicca, afraid of being lost and of finding themselves in the desert—the land of sand and sudden terrors. Many even were unwilling to go further, while others turned back towards Carthage.

At last, on the seventh day, after a long time spent in following the base of a mountain, they turned sharply to the right and came in sight of a line of ramparts planted upon white rocks, from which they were barely distinguishable. Suddenly the whole town arose before them, and veils, blue, yellow, and white, fluttered upon the walls in the red light of evening. They were worn by the priestesses of Tanit, who had hastened forth to give the men a welcome. They stood in ranks along the rampart, beating tambourines, touching the chords of lyres or shaking castanets, and between the strings of their harps, with their bare arms stretched across them, passed the rays of the setting sun as it sank behind the distant mountains of Numidia. At intervals the instruments became suddenly silent, and a harsh cry broke forth, abrupt, fierce, yet protracted, a kind of baying which they made by striking the tongue against the two corners of the mouth. Others remained leaning on their elbows,

## Salamambo

their chins in their hands, and more motionless than the sphinx, directed the piercing shafts of their great black eyes upon the ascending army.

\* Sicca, though a sacred town, could not contain so great a multitude ; the temple alone, with its out-buildings, occupied half of it. Accordingly the Barbarians took up their quarters in the plain just as they pleased, those accustomed to discipline in regular companies, the others according to nationality or their own whim. The Greeks set out their tents of hide in parallel lines ; the Iberians arranged their pavilions of cloth in circles ; the Gauls built themselves huts of planks, and the Libyans hovels of dry stones, while the Negroes with their fingernails dug pits in the sand for their lodging. Many, not knowing where to dispose themselves, wandered among the baggage, and at night slept upon the ground in their ragged cloaks.

Around them stretched the plain, bounded everywhere by mountains ; here and there, upon a sand-hill, stood a leaning palm tree ; the sides of the precipices were dotted with oak and pine. Sometimes the shower from a passing tempest would hang like a long scarf from the sky, while the landscape remained everywhere lapped in azure serenity ; then a warm wind would drive the dust in whirlwinds before it ; and from the heights of Sicca, whence a stream plunged downwards in cascades, there rose, with golden roof upon columns of brass, the temple of the Carthaginian Venus, the mistress of the land. She \*seemed to fill it with her soul, manifesting by these convulsions of the soil, these alternations in temperature, and these variations of

## At Sicca

light and shade, at once the exuberance of her vigour and the beauty of her eternal smile. The mountains, at their summits, took the form of a crescent, but some resembled the bosom of a woman offering her swelling breasts. The Barbarians felt their fatigues swallowed up in a prostration that was itself an ecstasy.

With the price of his dromedary Spendius had bought himself a slave. The whole day long he lay sleeping before Matho's tent, often awaking from dreams in which he heard the whistle of the lash. With a smile, he would pass his hands over the scars upon his legs where the fetters had hung so long, then fall once more asleep.

Matho accepted his company, and when he went abroad Spendius attended him like a lictor, or else Matho would lean carelessly upon his shoulder, for Spendius was short.

Passing together, one evening, through the thoroughfares of the camp, they caught sight of some men clad in white cloaks; among them was Narr' Havas, the prince of the Numidians.

Matho started. "Your sword!" he cried. "I want to kill him!"

"Not yet!" said Spendius, restraining him.

Narr' Havas was already approaching Matho. He kissed his two thumbs in token of friendship, ascribing his former passion to the intoxication of the feast; then he spoke at length against Carthage, but without saying what had brought him to the camp of the Barbarians.

Was it themselves, Spendius asked himself, whom he intended to betray, or was it really the Republic?



## Salamambo

As he calculated on turning every disturbance to his own advantage, he felt grateful to Narr' Havas for the perfidy he suspected him of contemplating.

The Numidian chief remained among the Mercenaries, and seemed desirous of winning Matho's goodwill. He sent him fat goats, gold-dust, and ostrich plumes. The Libyan, amazed at these blandishments, was in doubt whether to return them or to be incensed by them. But Spendius pacified him, and Matho, ever irresolute, the victim of an unconquerable lethargy, like one who has once taken some fatal draught, allowed himself to be guided by the slave.

One morning all three set out upon a lion hunt. Narr' Havas had concealed a dagger in his cloak, but Spendius walked persistently behind him, and on their return the dagger had not been drawn.

On another occasion Narr' Havas led them a great distance, to the very borders of his own kingdom. On reaching a narrow gorge, Narr' Havas declared with a smile that he no longer knew the way, but Spendius recovered it.

Most frequently of all, however, Matho, gloomy as an augur, would set off at sunrise to roam about the country; then, throwing himself upon the sand, would remain there motionless until nightfall.

He consulted in turn all the soothsayers in the army; those who watch the trail of serpents, those who read the stars, and those who breathe upon the ashes of the dead. He swallowed galbanum, seseli, and the poison of vipers, which chills the heart; negro women, chanting outlandish words by moonlight, punctured the skin of his forehead with

## At Sicca

stilettoes of gold ; he loaded himself with necklaces and amulets, and called by turns upon Baal-Khamon, Moloch, the seven Kabiri, Tanit, and the Greek Aphrodite. He engraved a name upon a plate of copper, and buried it in the sand at the threshold of his tent. Spendius would hear him groaning and talking to himself, and one night he entered.

Matho, naked as a corpse, lay prone upon a lion's skin, his face buried in his hands ; his weapons, which hung above his head upon the pole of the tent, were illumined by a suspended lamp.

"Are you suffering?" inquired the slave. "What is it you want? Answer me!" And he shook him by the shoulder, calling him several times, "Master! Master! . . ."

At last Matho lifted his great dull eyes. "Listen!" he said in a low voice, with his finger on his lips. "It is the wrath of the Gods! I am haunted by the daughter of Hamilcar ; I fear her, Spendius!" He hugged his arms to his bosom, like a child frightened at a phantom. "Talk to me ; I am ill ; I would be cured! I have tried everything. But you—maybe you know of Gods more powerful, of some irresistible invocation?"

"For what purpose?" asked Spendius.

"To rid me of her!" he answered, striking his head with both fists. Then, speaking to himself, with long pauses, "I must be the victim of some sacrifice she has vowed to the Gods. . . . She holds me bound by a chain that none can see. If I walk it is because she advances ; when I stop it is because she does not move. Her eyes consume

## Salamambo

me ; I hear her voice. She envelopes me, she penetrates my being. I feel as though she had become my soul !

• “Yet between us roll as it were the invisible billows of a boundless ocean ! She is remote ; utterly inaccessible ! The splendour of her beauty surrounds her with a halo of light ; there are moments when I fancy I have never seen her . . . that she does not exist . . . that all is a dream !”

Thus wept Matho in the darkness while the Barbarians slept. Spendius, watching him, thought of the young men who came with golden vases in their hands to beseech him as he led his troops of courtesans through the towns. A feeling of pity arose within him.

“Master,” he said, “be strong ! Call your determination to your aid, and no longer invoke the Gods, who turn not aside for the entreaties of men ! Why, now you weep like a coward ! Are you not ashamed that a woman can cause you such suffering ?”

“Am I a child ?” said Matho. “Do you suppose I am still to be stirred by their faces or their songs ? At Drepanum we had women to sweep our stables out. I have made them mine in the midst of the assault, beneath crumbling ceilings, before the catapult had ceased to quiver ! . . . But this one . . . this one, Spendius . . .”

The slave interrupted him. “If she were not the daughter of Hamilcar . . .”

“No !” cried Matho. “She has nothing in common with the daughters of men ! Have you seen those great eyes of hers beneath her great brows,

## At Sicca

like suns under triumphal arches? Think ; when she appeared every torch grew gale. In places her bare breast shone resplendent between the diamonds of her necklace ; behind her one breathed, as it were, the odour of a temple, and from her whole being came an emanation more fragrant than wine, more terrible than death. Meanwhile she advanced, and then she stopped."

He paused, with open mouth, his head drooping, his eyeballs staring.

"But I want her ! I must have her ! I am dying for her sake ! The thought of straining her to my heart transports me with a frenzy of delight . . . and yet I hate her, Spendius ! I should like to beat her ! What shall I do ? I have a mind to sell myself, that I may become her slave. You were—you ! You had the chance of seeing her ; tell me about her ! Every night she ascends, does she not, to the terrace of her palace ? Ah, how the stones must thrill beneath her sandals, and the stars lean out to see her !"

He fell back in a frenzy, breathing hoarsely like a wounded bull.

Then he chanted : "Into the forest he followed the female monster, whose tail wound its way over the dead leaves with the meanderings of a silver brook." And in tones long drawn out he imitated the voice of Salamambo, while his outspread hands reproduced the motion of a pair of light hands over the strings of a lyre.

To all the consolations of Spendius he repeated the same tale, and their nights were spent in these lamentations and exhortations.

## Salamambo

Matho sought to stupefy himself with wine, but after his intoxication he was more melancholy than before. He tried to divert himself with the knuckle-bones, and lost, one by one, the gold plates of his necklace. He was persuaded to visit the women who served the Goddess, but he descended the hill sobbing like one who returns from a funeral.

Spendius, on the contrary, became bolder and more cheerful. He might be seen holding forth among the soldiers in the canteens built of branches. He repaired old breastplates, performed feats of sleight of hand with daggers, and went out into the fields to gather herbs for the sick. He was humorous, adroit, ingenious, valuable; the Barbarians grew accustomed to his good offices, and he won their regard.

Meanwhile they were expecting an ambassador to come from Carthage with mules carrying panniers laden with gold, and would draw figures in the sand with their fingers, ever beginning the same calculation anew. Each one mapped out his life beforehand; some would have concubines, slaves, and lands, others intended to bury their treasure or to hazard it upon a vessel. But idleness rendered their tempers irritable; there were constant disputes between cavalry and foot-soldiers, Barbarians and Greeks, and the air was incessantly deafened by the shrill voices of women.

Every day bands of men kept arriving unexpectedly, almost naked, with grass on their heads to protect them from the sun; these were the debtors of rich Carthaginians; compelled to cultivate their creditors' land, they had made their escape.

## At Sicca

Libyans arrived in crowds: peasants ruined by taxation, men who had suffered banishment, and criminals. Then the crew of traders, all the sellers of wine and oil, furious at not being paid, laid the blame on the Republic, and Spendius inveighed against her. Soon the provisions ran short; there was talk of advancing in full force upon Carthage, and of calling in the Romans.

One evening at the supper hour ponderous sounds, as though made by something cracked, were heard approaching, and a red object appeared in the distance among the undulations of the ground.

It was a great purple litter, with bunches of ostrich plumes attached to the corners for the sake of ornament. Chains of crystal, with loops of pearls, flapped against its closed hangings. Following it were camels, whose great bells, suspended to their chests, rang as they walked, and around them could be seen horsemen clad from heel to shoulder in armour of golden scales.

At three hundred paces from the camp they halted, to take from the cases behind them their circular shields, broad swords, and Boeotian helmets. Some remained with the camels while the rest resumed their march. Last of all appeared the standards of the Republic, consisting of a staff of blue wood surmounted by a horse's head or a fir-cone. The Barbarians all rose to their feet and cheered, while the women rushed towards the guards of the Legion and kissed their feet.

The litter was borne on the shoulders of twelve Negroes, who kept time with short, quick steps, turning, as chance would have it, now to the right

## Salamambo

and now to the left, being impeded by the cords of the tents, by wandering cattle, and by the tripods on which meat was cooking. Sometimes the litter was partly opened by a fat hand, loaded with rings, and a hoarse voice shouted abuse ; whereupon the bearers halted, to resume their passage through the camp in a different direction.

But the purple curtains rose, and on a broad pillow was discerned a human head, bloated, impassive ; the eyebrows formed two arcs of raven black, meeting at the points ; spangles of gold glittered in the woolly hair, and so pallid was the face that it seemed as though powdered with marble dust. The remainder of the body was hidden beneath the fleeces which filled the litter.

In this recumbent form the soldiers recognised the Suffete Hanno, the man whose tardiness had contributed to the loss of the battle of the Ægates Insulæ, and if he had behaved with clemency in the matter of his victory over the Libyans at Hecatompylos, it was due, the Barbarians considered, to his avarice, since he had sold all the captives for his own benefit, whereas he had notified the Republic of their death.

After spending some time in seeking a convenient spot from which to address the soldiers, he gave a signal ; the litter came to a halt, and the tottering Hanno, supported by two slaves, set his feet to the ground.

He wore boots of black felt, spangled with silver crescents. His legs were swathed with narrow bandages, like those of a mummy, and his flesh found its way between the intersecting strips of

## At Sicca

linen. His abdomen projected from the scarlet coat which covered his thighs ; the folds of his neck hung down upon his chest like the dewlap of an ox ; his tunic, painted with flowers, was splitting at the arm-holes ; he wore a scarf, a girdle, and a broad black cloak with double sleeves which were fastened with laces. The superfluity of his garments, his great necklace of blue stones, his golden clasps and heavy earrings did but render his shapeless figure the more hideous. He might have been taken for some ponderous idol roughly hewn from a block of stone, for a pale leprosy, which covered his whole body, gave him the appearance of a thing without the power of motion. His nose, however, hooked like a vulture's beak, dilated vigorously to inhale the air, and his little eyes, the lashes of which were gummed together, glittered with a hard, metallic lustre. In his hand he held an aloe spatula, with which to scratch his skin.

At last two heralds sounded their silver trumpets ; the tumult abated, and Hanno commenced his discourse.

He began with a panegyric upon the Gods and upon the Republic ; the Barbarians ought to congratulate themselves upon having been engaged in her service. But they should show a more reasonable spirit ; times were hard, "and if a master had but three olives, was it not fair that he should keep two for himself ? "

Diversified thus with proverbs and parables, the old Suffete's speech was accompanied also by nods and becks, designed to elicit some sign of approbation.



## Salamambo

He spoke in Punic, and those about him (that is to say the most active, who had hurried thither without their arms) were Campanians, Gauls and Greeks, so that not a soul in the crowd understood him. Hanno, perceiving this, came to a pause and, swaying heavily from one leg to the other, reflected.

It occurred to him to summon the captains, and his heralds proclaimed the order in Greek—the language which had been employed for the purpose of giving commands in the Carthaginian army since the time of Xantippus.

The guards lashed the mob of soldiers asunder with whips, and soon the chiefs of the Barbarian cohorts arrived, together with the captains of the phalanxes formed upon the Spartan model, all wearing the badges of their rank and the armour peculiar to their nation. Night had fallen; a great uproar was spreading from place to place about the plain; here and there fires were burning, and men went from one to another asking "What is the matter?" and why the Suffete did not distribute the money.

He put before the captains the endless expenses the Republic had had to meet. Her treasury was empty; she was crushed beneath the weight of tribute exacted by the Romans. "We are at our wits' end! . . . She is greatly to be pitied!"

At intervals he scraped his limbs with his spatula of aloë, or paused to take from a silver cup presented by a slave a draught compounded of the ashes of a weasel and asparagus boiled in vinegar; then he wiped his lips upon a scarlet napkin, and resumed his discourse.

"What used to be worth a silver shekel is worth

## At Sicca

to-day three shekels of gold, and the land which was left uncultivated during the war brings in nothing at all! Our purpura fisheries are all but lost, and pearls themselves are at an extravagant price. We have barely enough ointments for the service of the Gods! As to provisions for the table, I say nothing about them; it is simply disastrous! For want of vessels we have no spices, and by reason of the revolt on the borders of Cyrene we have the greatest difficulty in obtaining silphium. Sicily, where so many slaves were to be had, is now closed to us! Only yesterday I gave more for a bath-keeper and four kitchen-servants than I used to give for a pair of elephants!"

He unrolled a long strip of papyrus and read over all the expenses the Government had incurred, without omitting a single figure: so much for the repair of the temples, for paving the streets, for building ships, for coral fisheries, for enlarging the common dining-rooms, and for machinery employed in the mines of Cantabria.

But the captains understood Punic no better than the soldiers, although the Mercenaries exchanged salutes in that tongue. It was customary to appoint a few Carthaginian officers to positions in the Barbarian forces, that they might serve as interpreters, but after the war they had concealed themselves from fear of vengeance, and Hanno had not thought of taking them with him. His hollow voice, moreover, was lost in the wind.

The Greeks, girt with their iron sword-belts, strained their ears in the effort to grasp his meaning, while the mountaineers, clad in furs like bears,

## Salamambo

watched him with mistrust, or yawned, leaning upon their brass-nailed clubs. The Gauls, whose lofty heads of hair shook with their sneering laughter, paid little attention, and the men of the desert, their heads completely shrouded in their garments of grey wool, stood motionless, listening. Others kept coming up from behind; the guards, jostled by the throng, reeled upon their horses; the Negroes carried blazing pine branches at arm's length, and the unwieldy Carthaginian, mounted on a heap of turf, continued his harangue.

The Barbarians, however, were growing impatient. Murmurs arose, and everyone shouted at him. Hanno gesticulated with his spatula, and those who wished to silence the others shouted still louder and added to the uproar.

Suddenly a man of somewhat mean appearance sprang out in front of Hanno and snatching a trumpet from a herald blew a blast thereon. Spendius (for it was he) announced that he was about to say something of importance. To this declaration, rapidly uttered in five different languages—Greek, Latin, Gallic, Libyan, and Balearic—the captains, half laughing, half astonished, replied, "Speak on! Speak on!"

Spendius hesitated, and trembled. Finally addressing himself to the Libyans, who were the most numerous, he said—

"You have all heard the horrible threats this man has uttered!"

There was no outcry of protest from Hanno, whence it was clear that he did not understand Libyan, and Spendius, continuing his experiment,

## At Sicca

repeated the same sentence in the other dialects spoken by the Barbarians.

They looked at one another in amazement; then all of them, as though by a tacit agreement, and thinking perhaps that they had understood after all, nodded their heads in token of assent.

Thereupon Spendius began in vehement tones: "In the first place he said that in comparison with those of Carthage the Gods of all other nations were but idle dreams! He called you cowards, thieves, liars, dogs, and the sons of dogs! But for you, he declared—in so many words!—the Republic would not have to pay tribute to the Romans; by your excesses you have drained her of perfumes, aromatics, slaves, and silphium, for you are in collusion with the nomads on the borders of Cyrene! But the guilty will be punished! He has read the list of their sentences; they will be compelled to labour at the paving of the streets, at the equipment of vessels, at the decoration of the common dining-halls, while the rest will be sent to the country of the Cantabrians to delve the earth in the mines."

Spendius repeated the substance of his discourse to the Gauls, the Greeks, the Campanians, and the Balearic Islanders. Recognising many of the proper names which their ears had caught, they were convinced that he was giving a faithful report of the Suffete's address. A few there were who cried, "You are lying!" but their voices were drowned in the clamour raised by the others. "Did you not see," concluded Spendius, "that he left a body of horsemen in reserve outside the camp? At a signal they will rush upon you, to slaughter everyone."

## Salamambo

The Barbarians turned in that direction. Just then the crowd parted, and there appeared in its midst, approaching slowly as a phantom, a human being, all gaunt and bent, absolutely naked, but hidden down to his flanks by long hair covered with dry leaves, dust, and thorns. Around his loins and about his knees were wisps of straw and fragments of linen; his limp, cadaverous-looking skin hung upon his fleshless limbs like rags upon dry branches; his hands trembled with a continuous quivering, and he leaned, as he walked, upon a staff of olive.

He was now close to the Negroes who bore the torches. A kind of idiotic chuckle revealed his pale gums, and his great frightened eyes gazed at the crowd of Barbarians around him.

But with a cry of terror he threw himself behind them, shielding himself with their bodies, and, stammering out, "There they are! There they are!" pointed to the guards of the Suffete, who stood motionless in their glittering armour. Dazzled by the light of the torches flaring brilliantly in the darkness, their horses pawed the ground, while the human spectre writhed and screamed, "They have killed them!"

As he shouted these words in Balearic some of the Islanders came up and recognised him, but without answering them he repeated—

"Yes, all killed—all! Trodden down like grapes! Those gallant lads, the slingers! My comrades, and yours!"

They gave him a draught of wine, and he wept; then he burst forth into a flood of words.

Spendius found it difficult to conceal his delight

## At Sicca

as he interpreted to the Greeks and Libyans the horrible things narrated by Zarxas; he could scarcely believe them, so opportunely did they transpire. The Balearians grew pale when they learned how their comrades had perished.

These were a band of three hundred slingers who, having landed the evening before, had that day slept too late. When they reached the square of Khamon the Barbarians had gone, and their balls of clay having been loaded upon the camels with the remainder of the baggage, they found themselves without means of defence. They were allowed to advance along the street of Satheb as far as the oaken gate with its lining of plates of brass; then the populace, animated by a single impulse, had fallen upon them.

The soldiers, in fact, recollected a great cry. Spendius, in his flight at the head of the columns, had not heard it.

Then the corpses were placed in the arms of the Dii Pātæci which surround the temple of Khamon. They were accused of all the crimes committed by the Mercenaries: their gluttony, their thefts, their acts of impiety, their high-handed behaviour, and the slaughter of the fish in Salamambo's garden. Their bodies were subjected to shameful mutilation; the priests set fire to their hair in order that their souls might be tortured; fragments of their flesh were suspended in the booths of the meat-sellers; some even buried their teeth in them, and in the evening, to make an end of them, fires were lighted at the crossways.

These were the flames which had shone from afar

## Salamambo

upon the lake. But a few houses having 'caught fire, such of the dead and dying as still remained were hurriedly thrown over the walls. Zarxas had remained until the following day among the reeds on the border of the lake; then he had wandered about the country seeking the army by the traces of footsteps in the dust. In the morning he concealed himself in caves; in the evening he set out once more, with bleeding wounds, famishing and ill, living on roots and carrion. At last he caught sight one day of lances on the horizon, and had followed them up, for his reason was disordered by terror and privation.

The indignation which the soldiers had restrained while he was speaking burst forth like a tempest; they wanted to slaughter the guards as well as the Suffete. Some interposed, saying that they ought to hear what he had to say, and to find out whether they were to be paid. Then everyone shouted, "Our money!" and Hanno replied that he had brought it.

There was a rush to the outposts, and the Suffete's baggage, urged onward by the Barbarians, arrived among the tents. They speedily unfastened the baskets, without waiting for the slaves; and therein discovered robes of hyacinth, sponges, scrapers, brushes, perfumes, and pencils of antimony for painting the eyes—all of which belonged to the Guards who, as rich men, were accustomed to such luxuries. Next a great bronze tub was discovered on a camel: it, belonged to the Suffete, and was used for his baths in the course of his journey; for he had taken all sorts of precautions, even to the

## At Sicca

extent of bringing caged weasels from Hecatompylos, to be roasted alive for his medicine. But as his disease gave him a great appetite, there were also wines and provisions in great quantity — pickle, meat and fish preserved in honey, and little pots of Commagene, which consisted of goose-fat fried down and covered with snow and chopped straw. The supply was abundant ; the more baskets they opened, the more there appeared, and laughter broke forth spasmodically like the shock of conflicting waves.

As for the Mercenaries' pay, it very nearly filled two baskets of esparto grass ; in one of them there were even to be seen some of the leathern counters with which the Republic eked out its specie, and as the Barbarians manifested considerable astonishment, Hanno declared their accounts to be so involved that the Ancients had not had the time to examine them, and therefore sent them this on account.

At that everything was upset and overturned — mules, lackeys, provisions, baggage, and the litter itself. The soldiers took the money from the sacks in order to pelt Hanno. With great difficulty he succeeded in mounting an ass, and, clinging to its mane, howling, weeping, jolted about and bruised, he betook himself to flight, calling down upon the heads of the army the curses of all the Gods. His broad necklace of precious stones flapped up and down even to the height of his ears ; with his teeth he retained the superfluous length of his trailing cloak, and behind him in the distance the Barbarians shouted, " Be off, coward ! Swine ! Cesspit of Moloch ! Sweat out your gold and your distemper !



## Salamambo

Quicker! Quicker!" while the escort galloped in confusion at his side.

But the rage of the Barbarians did not abate. They remembered that a number of them, who had set out for Carthage, had not returned; doubtless they had been killed. Such wanton injustice infuriated them. They began to pluck up the tent-pegs, to roll up their cloaks, and to saddle their horses; each took his helmet and sword, and in a trice everything was ready. Those who had no arms hastened into the woods to cut themselves staves.

Day broke, and the inhabitants of Sicca, aroused from their sleep, began to move about the streets. "They are going to Carthage," they said, and the report soon spread throughout the district.

Every footpath, every ravine poured forth its contingent of men. Shepherds were seen coming down from the mountains at a run.

Then, when the Barbarians had gone, Spendius rode round the plain, mounted on a Punic stallion, and accompanied by a slave, who led a third horse. One tent only remained. Spendius entered it.

"Up, master! Get up! We are off!"

"Whither are you going?" asked Matho.

"To Carthage!" cried Spendius.

\* Matho sprang upon the horse which the slave was holding outside.

### III

#### SALAMMBO

THE rising moon was level with the waves ; the town was still wrapped in darkness, but white gleams and points of light glittered about it : the pole of a cart within a court, some dangling scrap of linen, the angle of a wall or the golden necklace on the bosom of a god. Here and there, on the roofs of temples, globes of glass flashed like huge diamonds. But vague ruins, gardens, and heaps of black soil made darker masses in the gloom, and below Malqua there were fishermen's nets suspended from house to house, like gigantic bats unfolding their wings. The creaking of the hydraulic wheels which raised the water to the topmost story of the palace was no longer to be heard, and amid the terraces the camels, each, like an ostrich, reclining on his paunch, were peacefully resting. Porters were sleeping in the streets against the sills of the houses ; the shadows of mighty statues stretched across the deserted squares ; in the distance the smoke of a still burning sacrifice escaped at times through the tiles of bronze, and with the fragrance of aromatics the scent of salt water, and the exhalation from the walls after the heat of the day came borne on the sultry breeze. The city lay

## Salamambo

encircled by a glittering expanse of motionless waves, for the moon unfolded her radiance alike upon the mountain-girdled gulf and on the lake of Tunis, where the flamingoes stood in long, red lines amid the sandbanks ; while beyond, below the catacombs, the great salt lagoon flashed like a piece of silver. At the edge of the horizon the blue vault of heaven sank on the one side into the dusty haze of the plains, on the other into the mists of the sea, and upon the summit of the Acropolis the pyramidal cypresses around the temple of Eschmoun swayed with a murmur like that of the monotonous waves which slowly lapped the side of the mole, below the ramparts.

Salamambo, supported by a slave who carried an iron dish containing kindled charcoal, ascended to the terrace of her palace. In its midst was a little ivory couch covered with lynx skins and cushions made of the feathers of the parrot, a prophetic animal sacred to the Gods, and at the four corners stood four long brasiers filled with nard, incense, cinnamon, and myrrh. The slave kindled the perfumes. Salamambo fixed her eyes upon the pole star, slowly made obeisance to the four quarters of the sky, and knelt upon the ground amid the azure dust, which was strewn with golden stars in imitation of the heavens. Then, holding both elbows close to her sides, her forearms perfectly straight and her hands outspread, she threw back her head beneath the rays of the moon.

"O Rabbetna ! . . . Baalet ! . . . Tanit !" she said, with a plaintive prolongation of her tones, as though she were calling someone. "Anaitis !

## Salamambo

Astarté! Derceto! Astoreth! Mylitta! Athara! Elissa! Tiratha! . . . By the secret symbols,—by the sounding sistras,—by the furrows of the earth,—by the eternal silence and by the eternal fruitfulness,—mistress of the melancholy sea, and of the azure shores, O Queen of all things moist, hail!”

Two or three times she swayed her whole body, then cast herself down, with forehead in the dust and arms outstretched.

Her slave raised her quickly, for the rites required that someone should snatch the suppliant from her prostration; this being the token that she was accepted by the Gods, and a pious duty which the nurse of Salamambo never failed to perform.

Brought to Carthage in her early childhood by merchants from Darytian Gaetulia, the nurse had refused to forsake her masters after her enfranchisement, as was testified by the large hole pierced in her right breast. A skirt, striped with many colours, and fitting her closely about the hips, descended to her ankles, these legs encircled by pewter rings, which clashed against each other as she walked. Her face was somewhat flat, and yellow as her tunic. Silver pins of great length made a circle of rays behind her head. She wore a coral stud upon her nostril, and, erect as a hermes, stood, with downcast lids, beside the couch.

Salamambo advanced to the edge of the terrace. For a moment her eyes swept the horizon, then fell until they rested upon the slumbering town, and as her bosom rose with the sigh she heaved, the long white simar which hung about her, destitute

## Salamambo

of either clasp or girdle, waved from end to end. Her sandals, with their upturned points, were covered with a mass of emeralds, and a network of purple threads was filled with her unbound hair.

But she raised her head to contemplate the moon, and mingling with her words the fragments of a hymn, she murmured—

“How light is thy motion, sustained as thou art by the impalpable ether! It brightens about thee, and by the impulse of thy inward activity are dispensed the winds and the fertilising dews. As thou waxest and wanest, so expand or diminish the eyes of cats and the spots of the panther. It is thy name that wives call aloud in the pains of childbirth! Thou makest shell-fish to swell, wines to bubble, and corpses to decay! Thou formest the pearls on the floor of the sea! All germs, O Goddess, seethe in thy dark and gloomy depths!

“When thou appearest, tranquillity is shed abroad upon the earth; the flowers close, the waves sink to rest, weary men stretch forth their bosoms to thee, and as in a mirror the world with its oceans and its mountains gazes on itself within thy face. White art thou, gentle and luminous, the helper and the purifier, spotless and serene.”

The crescent moon was hanging above the mountain of the Hot Springs on the opposite side of the gulf, in the depression between its two summits. Beneath it was a small star, and all around a circle of pale light.

“Yet terrible art thou,” resumed Salamambo, “as a mistress! By thee are monsters brought forth, and terrible phantoms and lying dreams; thy eyes

## Salamambo

consume the stones of buildings, and apes sicken whenever thou growest young.

"Whither goest thou? Why for ever changing thy forms? At times as a slender bow thou glidest through space like a mastless galley, or keepest watch amid the stars like a shepherd over his flock. Round and glittering, thou skimmiest the tops of the mountains like the wheel of a car.

"Ah, Tanit! Dost thou not love me? I have watched thee so long! But no! Thou sailest through thine azure, and I remain on the motionless earth.

"Taanach, take your nebel, and play softly on the silver cord, for my heart is sorrowful!"

The slave took up a kind of harp of ebony, taller than herself and triangular like a delta; she fixed the point in a crystal globe, and with both hands began to play.

Hurriedly the sounds followed one another, with the muffled rumbling of the humming of bees; and growing more and more sonorous, fled away into the night with the moaning of the waves and the rustling of the tall trees on the heights of the Acropolis.

"Hush!" cried Salamambo.

"What is it, mistress? Everything disturbs and troubles you now—the whisper of the breeze, or the passing cloud."

"I do not know," she said.

"You exhaust yourself with long prayers."

"O Taanach! I would dissolve my soul therein as a flower is absorbed by wine!"

"Is it, perchance, the smoke of your perfumes?"

"No," said Salamambo. "In sweet odours dwells the spirit of the Gods."

## Salamambo

Then the slave spoke to her of her father. He was supposed to have left for the amber country, beyond the pillars of Melkarth! "But should he not return," she said, "you must nevertheless choose a husband among the sons of the Ancients, in accordance with his desire, and in the arms of a man your dark humour will vanish away."

"Why?" asked the girl. All those she had remarked had horrified her with their wild beast's laughter and their coarse limbs.

"At times, Taanach, from the depths of my being there arise as it were hot waves more stifling than the fumes of a volcano. Voices call me, a ball of fire revolves and rises within my breast; it chokes me, and I am on the point of death; then, something soft and sweet steals into my frame, coursing from my forehead to my feet . . . a caress that enfolds me, and I feel myself borne down as though a god were stretching himself upon me. Oh! fain would I be swallowed up in the night mist, in the depths of the stream, in the sap of the trees; fain would I quit my own form to become but a breath, a beam of light, and float and soar, O mother, to thee!"

Arching her figure as she leaned backwards, she stretched her arms aloft to their full length, and in her long robe she seemed pale and unsubstantial as the moon. Then she fell back panting upon the ivory couch; but Taanach passed around her throat a necklace of amber with dolphins' teeth in order to banish terrors, and Salamambo, in a faint whisper, said, "Fetch me Schahabarim."

Her father had not allowed her to enter the

## Salamambo

priestesses' college, or even to learn anything of Tanit as known to the common people. He reserved her for some alliance which might further his political designs, and Salamambo dwelt alone in the palace,\* her mother having long been dead.

She had grown up in the practice of abstinence, fasting, and purification, always surrounded by objects of refinement and of serious import, her body steeped in perfumes, her soul full of prayers. She had never tasted wine, nor eaten meat, never touched an unclean animal, nor set foot within the dwelling of the dead.

She knew nothing of obscene representations of the Gods, for since every god manifested himself through divers forms, religious practices so different as often to contradict one another testified to the same principle, and Salamambo worshipped the Goddess in her sidereal form. The maiden had become subject to the influence of the moon; she grew weaker with the waning of the orb. Languid throughout the day, with the evening she revived, and during an eclipse she had barely escaped death. .

But the jealous Rabbet avenged herself for the virginity of which her sacrifices were deprived, and harassed Salamambo with obsessions which were all the stronger because they were obscure, and mingled with and quickened by her faith.

Preyed upon by a ceaseless curiosity with regard to Tanit, the daughter of Hamilcar had acquired a knowledge of her adventures, her travels, and all her names, which she repeated without any clear conception of their different meanings. That she might penetrate her doctrine to its depths, she



## Salamambo

desired to make acquaintance with the ancient idol, upon whose magnificent mantle depended the destinies of Carthage, in the innermost sanctuary of the temple; for the idea of a god was not sharply distinguished from his representation, and to hold or even to see his image was to acquire a portion of his power, and, in some sort, to control him.

Salamambo turned herself about. She had recognised the sound of the little golden bells which Schahabarim wore around the skirts of his vestment.

He ascended the flights of stairs, and, coming to a halt at the threshold of the terrace, folded his arms. His sunken eyes gleamed like lamps in a sepulchre, and in its linen robe, weighed down by the little bells which hung, alternately with spheres of emerald, about his feet, his tall, thin form was but vaguely defined. His limbs were feeble, his forehead retreating, his chin pointed; his skin felt cold to the touch, and his yellow face, furrowed by deep wrinkles, seemed, as it were, constrained with a yearning, a perpetual mortification. Schahabarim was the high-priest of Tanit, and by him Salamambo had been trained.

"Speak!" he said. "What wouldst thou?"

"I hoped . . . you had almost promised me. . . ." She stammered and became confused; then continued abruptly, "Why do you despise me? What is there in the rites that I have omitted? You are my teacher, you have told me that none was so skilled as I in all that appertains to the Goddess, but there are things that you are unwilling to disclose. Is it so, my father?"

## Salamambo

Schahabarim recollected the instructions of Hamilcar. "No," he replied; "I have nothing more to teach thee."

"A Spirit," she resumed, "inspires me with this love. I have mounted the steps of Eschmoun, deity of the planets and of the human understanding; have slept beneath the golden olive tree of Melkarth, patron of the colonies of Tyre; have shut to the doors of Baal-Khamon, the source of fertility and enlightenment; have sacrificed to the subterranean Kabiri, to the gods of the woods, the winds, the mountains, and the streams; but all are too remote, too far above me, too indifferent—you understand?—whilst she, I feel, is blended with my life; she fills my soul. I thrill with inward transports as though she were making mighty efforts to escape. I seem to hear her voice—to catch glimpses of her face; I am dazzled by flashes of light—and once more I fall back into the dark."

Schahabarim held his peace; she appealed to him with eyes full of entreaty. At last he indicated by a gesture that the slave, who was not of Canaanite race, should be dismissed. Taanach vanished, and Schahabarim, his arm outstretched, began—

"Before the Gods, darkness alone existed, and there hovered a breath, torpid and vague as the consciousness of one who dreams. Contracting, it created Desire and Vapour, and from Vapour and Desire issued primitive Matter, a miry fluid, deep, black and cold as ice. Therein dwelt inert monsters, such as are depicted on the walls of sanctuaries, the unconnected elements of forms yet to be.

"Then Matter condensed, and became an egg.

## Salamambo

This broke, the one half forming the earth, the other the heavens. Sun and moon, winds and clouds appeared, and at the crash of the thunder-bolt intelligent animals awoke. Thereupon Eschmoun unfolded himself within the starry sphere, Khamon shone forth in the form of the sun; Melkarth, putting forth his arms, drove him behind Gades; the Kabiri buried themselves beneath the volcanoes, and Rabbetna bent over the world like a nursing-mother, shedding her light like milk and her darkness like a garment."

"And then?" she said.

He had told her the secret of the beginning of things to divert her attention by loftier vistas; but the maiden's longing revived at his last words, and Schahabarim, half yielding, resumed—

"She inspires and controls the loves of men."

"The loves of men!" repeated Salamambo, musing.

"She is the soul of Carthage," continued the priest; "and though she is spread abroad in every place, her dwelling-place is here, beneath the sacred veil."

"O my father!" cried Salamambo. "I may see her, may I not? You will take me thither! I have long been hesitating whether to ask you; I am consumed with longing to see her form. Help me, for pity's sake! Let us go!"

He spurned her with a passionate, imperious gesture.

"Never! Dost thou not know that it means death? To none but us, men in intelligence, women by our weakness, do the Baals reveal their herma-

## Salamambo

phrodite forms. Thy desire is a sacrilege ; be content with the knowledge thou hast ! ”

She fell on her knees, putting her two fingers to her ears in token of repentance, and sobbing ; crushed by the declaration of the priest, and full at the same time of wrath against him, of terror and of humiliation. Schahabarim, more insensible than the stones of the terrace, stood looking down upon her as she trembled at his feet, and experienced a kind of joy in seeing her suffer for his divinity, whom not even he himself could make entirely his own.

The birds were already singing, the wind blew chill, the sky, growing paler, was traversed by little clouds. Suddenly he perceived, on the horizon behind Tunis, as it were faint wreaths of haze which trailed upon the ground ; then a great curtain of grey dust rose perpendicularly aloft, and amid the clouds of the surging mass there appeared lances, shields, and the heads of dromedaries. It was the army of the Barbarians advancing upon Carthage.

## IV

### BENEATH THE WALLS OF CARTHAGE

**C**OUNTRY-FOLK, mounted on asses or running on foot, pale, breathless, and mad with fear, made their way into the town. They were flying before the army. It had accomplished the march from Sicca in three days, with the object of utterly destroying everything in Carthage.

The gates were closed, and immediately afterwards the Barbarians made their appearance ; but they halted in the midst of the isthmus, on the shore of the lake.

They did not at first evince any hostile intentions. Several approached with palms in their hands, but so great was the terror that they were driven back with arrows.

Sometimes, in the morning and at nightfall, men came prowling about beneath the walls. Attention was especially attracted to a man of short stature who wrapped himself carefully in his cloak and concealed his face by a vizor of great depth. He spent long hours in observing the aqueduct, and was so persistent therein that he doubtless wished to mislead the Carthaginians as to his real intentions. He was accompanied by another man, almost a giant, who went bare-headed.

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

But Carthage was protected throughout the entire width of the isthmus ; first by a moat, next by a rampart of earth, and lastly by a wall of wrought stone, in two stories, and thirty cubits in height. It contained stables for three hundred elephants, with storage for their housings, their shackles, and their provender ; besides further stabling to accommodate four thousand horses, with their harness, and barley for their keep, and quarters for twenty thousand soldiers, their armour, and all requisite military stores. Towers, every one loopholed, rose above the second story, and were protected outside by bronze shields suspended from hooks.

This first line of fortifications afforded immediate protection to Malqua, the quarter occupied by the seafaring population and by the dyers. Masts were visible, upon which purple sails were hung out to dry, and on the farthest terraces were clay furnaces for boiling brine.

Behind rose the lofty cube-shaped houses of the town, rank on rank, after the fashion of an amphitheatre, and built of either stone, wood, pebbles, reeds, shells, or compressed earth. Amid this mountain of variously coloured boulders the groves of the temples appeared like lakes of verdure, at irregular intervals level spaces were formed by the public squares, and from top to bottom it was intersected by a network of innumerable alleys. It was possible to make out the walls of the three ancient quarters of the town, now no longer separate from one another. They rose here and there like great rocks, or else extended in huge fragments, half covered with flowers, stained with broad dark

## Salamambo

streaks where filth had been thrown over ; and the streets passed between their yawning apertures like rivers beneath bridges.

The hill of the Acropolis, in the centre of Byrsa, was concealed by a confusion of public buildings—temples, whose twisted columns bore capitals of bronze and metal chains, cones of mortarless stone, with stripes of pale blue, cupolas of copper, marble architraves, Babylonian buttresses, obelisks, resting on their apexes, like torches inverted. Peristyle reached aloft to pediment, volutes revealed themselves between colonnades ; partitions constructed of tiles were supported by walls of granite—each rising above and half concealing the other in a marvellous and incomprehensible fashion. In face of it one became conscious of the procession of the ages, of the memorials, as it were, of nations now forgotten.

Behind the Acropolis the *Via Mappaliensis*, bordered with tombs, stretched away across the red soil in a straight line from the shore to the catacombs ; beyond it were gardens dotted with spacious dwellings, and this third quarter, Megara, the new town, extended to the very edge of the cliff, whereon rose a giant beacon which blazed every night.

Such was the picture presented by Carthage to the soldiers who had taken up their quarters in the plain.

From their distant encampment they identified the markets and squares, and disputed as to the situation of the temples. That sacred to Khamon, opposite the Syssitia, was tiled with gold ; Melkarth, to the left of Eschmoun, had branches of coral upon its roof ; farther off the copper cupola of Tazit

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

reared its dome among the palm trees, while dark Moloch had his shrine below the reservoirs, in the direction of the beacon. Divinities with hideous heads, sometimes colossal, sometimes squat, with enormous bellies, or else flattened out of all due proportion, open-throated, with arms outstretched, holding in their hands forks, chains, or javelins, were to be seen at the angles of pediments, on the tops of walls, at the corners of squares—everywhere; while at the extremities of the streets, rendered in appearance steeper still by perspective, stretched the blue of the sea.

From morning till night the thoroughfares were filled with a noisy crowd; lads, swinging bells, shouted at the doors of the baths; steam issued from the shops where hot drinks were sold, the air echoed with the beating of anvils, the white cocks sacred to the Sun crowed upon the terraces, from the temples came the lowing of oxen which were being slaughtered, slaves with baskets on their heads ran to and fro, while some barefooted priest, with pointed cap and dark, flowing mantle, would appear in the recess of a doorway.

To the Barbarians the spectacle thus presented by Carthage was irritating. They admired her, they regarded her with abhorrence; they longed at once to annihilate her and to make her their habitation. What could there be within the military port, protected by that threefold wall? And then, behind the town, beyond Megara, higher even than the Acropolis, appeared the palace of Hamilcar.

Matho's gaze was perpetually directed towards it. He climbed the olive trees and leaned forward, his



## Salamambo

hand outstretched above his eyebrows. The gardens were empty, and the red door with the black cross remained constantly shut.

' A score of times and more he made the tour of the ramparts, in search of some breach by which he might enter. One night he leapt into the gulf, and swam for three hours without a rest. He reached the shore below the Mappalia, and attempted to scale the cliff. He covered his knees with blood and broke his nails, then fell back into the water and returned.

His impotence exasperated him. He was jealous of Carthage, because it contained Salamambo, as of someone who had enjoyed possession of her. His lethargy left him and gave place to a wild, unceasing thirst for action. With cheeks aflame, fiery eyes, and hoarse voice, he would stride rapidly through the camp; or else would sit upon the shore and scour his great sword with sand. He would shoot at the passing vultures with arrows. His heart overflowed in furious words.

"Give your wrath the rein," said Spendius, "like a runaway chariot. Shout, blaspheme, spoil, and slay! Anguish abates with the letting of blood, and since your love is not to be satisfied, glut your hate; it will sustain you!"

\* Matho resumed the command of his troops, and drilled them unmercifully. He was respected for his courage, but most of all for his strength. He inspired, moreover, a kind of mystic dread; it was believed that at night he held converse with phantoms. The other chiefs became animated by his example, and the army was soon reduced to a state

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

of discipline. The Carthaginians heard, from their houses, the trumpet blasts by which their movements were directed. At last the Barbarians approached the town.

To crush them within the limits of the isthmus two armies would have had to take them in rear at the same time, and of these one would require to land at the extremity of the Gulf of Utica, the other at the mountain of the Hot Springs. But what could be done with the Sacred Legion alone, at the utmost six thousand strong? If the Mercenaries turned eastwards, they would unite with the nomads, cut off the road from Cyrene and intercept the trade with the desert. Should they fall back towards the west, Numidia would rise. Finally, the lack of supplies would compel them, sooner or later, to lay waste the surrounding country like locusts, and the Rich trembled for their fair mansions, their vineyards, and their farms.

Hanno suggested outrageous and impracticable measures, such as offering a large sum for the head of each Barbarian, or burning their camp with the aid of vessels and engines of war. His colleague, Gisco, on the other hand, wished them to be paid. But the Ancients detested him on account of his popularity; for they were afraid that chance might make him their master, and from fear of a monarchy they strove to weaken whatever was left of it or tended to restore it.

Beyond the fortifications dwelt a people of different race and of unknown origin—all of them porcupine hunters, eaters of shell-fish and serpents. They caught live hyænas in caverns, and in the evenings

## Salamambo

raced them for sport on the sands of Megara, between the tombstones. Their cabins, built of mud and sea-weed, clung to the cliff like swallows' nests. There they dwelt, in promiscuous confusion, without either government or gods, absolutely naked, at once feeble and savage, and for centuries past abhorred by the Carthaginians on account of their unclean diet. One morning the sentinels observed that they were all gone.

At last some of the members of the Great Council determined on a course of action. They came to the camp wearing neither girdle nor collar, and with open-work sandals on their feet, as neighbours might do. They approached unconcernedly, waving salutations to the captains or stopping to speak to the soldiers, saying that everything was settled and that their claims would receive satisfaction.

Many of them saw a camp of Mercenaries for the first time. In place of the confusion they had pictured, the order and the silence which reigned throughout were alarming. A rampart of turf enclosed the army within a lofty wall, proof against the shock of catapults; the surface of the roads was sprinkled with fresh water, and through the apertures of the tents they caught glimpses of tawny-coloured eyes gleaming in the darkness. Stacks of spears and suspended armour dazzled their eyes like mirrors. They talked in whispers and were afraid of upsetting things with their long robes.

The soldiers demanded provisions, promising to pay out of the money due to them.

The Carthaginians sent them cattle, sheep, guinea-

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

fowls, dried fruits, and lupins, with smoked mackerel of the excellent brand which Carthage despatched to every port. But they walked contemptuously round the superb animals, disparaging what they coveted, offering the value of a pigeon for a ram and the price of a pomegranate for three goats. The Eaters-of-unclean-things, coming forward as arbitrators, declared that they were being cheated, whereupon they drew their swords and threatened bloodshed.

Commissioners appointed by the Great Council wrote down the number of years' pay which was due to each soldier. But it was no longer possible to tell how many Mercenaries had been enlisted, and the Ancients were appalled at the exorbitant sum they would have to pay. It would be necessary to sell the reserve of silphium and to tax the trading cities; the Mercenaries, with whom Tunis already sided, would become impatient, and the Rich, bewildered by the frenzies of Hanno and the reproaches of his colleague, recommended that such of the citizens as were acquainted with any of the Barbarians should at once visit them with the object of winning back their friendship and speaking to them in a conciliatory manner. Such a display of confidence would soothe their ruffled spirits.

Merchants, writers, men employed in the arsenal, whole families betook themselves to the Barbarian camp. The soldiers permitted all the Carthaginians to enter, but by a passage so narrow that four men walking abreast rubbed elbows. Spendius, standing beside the gate, had them all carefully searched, while Matho, opposite him, examined the crowd in

## Salamambo

the hope of finding someone whom he had seen about the palace of Salamambo.

So full was the camp of people and commotion that it resembled a town. The two distinct crowds mingled without becoming confused, the one clothed in linen or wool, with felt caps not unlike fir-cones, the other clad in steel and wearing helmets. Hither and thither, among serving-men and hawkers, wandered women of every nationality, brown as ripe dates, greenish like olives, or yellow as oranges, sold by sailors, picked up in hovels, stolen from caravans, captured in the sack of towns, pestered with love while they were young, belaboured with blows when they were old, left to die by the roadside among abandoned baggage and beasts of burden when the army was in flight. Straight, tawny-coloured robes of dromedary's hair swayed about the heels of the nomads' wives; musicians from Cyrenaica, draped in violet muslin and painted about the eyelids, crouched upon mats as they sang; old negresses, with pendent breasts, picked up animals' dung, to be dried in the sun for fuel; women from Syracuse wore plates of gold in their hair; Lusitanians had necklaces of shells; the women of Gaul wore wolf-skins over their white bosoms; while sturdy children, covered with vermin, naked and uncircumcised, butted the passers-by with their heads, or came behind like young tigers and bit their hands.

The Carthaginians strolling about the camp were amazed at the superabundance of things it contained. The most uneasy were depressed; the others disguised their anxiety.

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

The soldiers clapped them on the shoulder, inciting them to merriment. Whenever they caught sight of a personage of importance they invited him to join in their amusements. Were they playing at quoits, they contrived to crush his feet; were they boxing, they broke his jaw at the first exchange. The slingers terrified the Carthaginians with their slings, the serpent-charmers frightened them with vipers, and the horsemen with their steeds. Men of peaceful occupations, the townspeople, at every outrage, bowed their heads and forced a smile. Some, to prove their courage, indicated by signs that they wished to become soldiers. They were set to split wood and curry-comb the mules, or buckled into suits of armour and rolled like barrels about the streets of the camp. Then, when they made ready to leave, the Mercenaries threw themselves into grotesque attitudes and tore their hair.

Many, however, either from want of sense or because it was really their fixed idea, artlessly believed that all Carthaginians were wealthy, and kept following behind them begging for some gift. They demanded everything that struck them as pretty: a ring, a belt, a pair of sandals or the fringe on a garment, and when the plundered Carthaginian exclaimed, "But I have nothing more. What is it you want?" they replied, "Your wife!" while others said, "Your life!"

The military accounts were delivered to the officers, read to the soldiers, and definitely approved. Then they put in a claim for tents, and tents were given them. Next the Greek polemarchs demanded some of the beautiful suits of armour that were manu-

## Salamambo

factured at Carthage, and the Greek Council voted sums for their purchase. But it was only fair, the cavalry maintained, that they should receive compensation for their horses; one had lost three, he declared, in such and such a siege, another five during a certain march, and another fourteen among the precipices. They were offered stallions from Hecatompilos, but they preferred money.

Then they insisted on being paid in cash (hard coin and not leather counters) for all the corn that was due to them, and at the highest price that had been reached during the war, insomuch that for a measure of flour they demanded four hundred times as much as they had given for a sack of corn. This injustice enraged the Carthaginians, who had, however, no option but to yield.

Thereupon the delegates of the Great Council and those of the soldiers became reconciled to one another, swearing by the Genius of Carthage and the Gods of the Barbarians, and exchanging excuses and blandishments in the verbose and demonstrative fashion of orientals. Then, as a proof of friendship, the soldiers demanded the punishment of the traitors who had prejudiced the Republic against them. The Carthaginians pretended that they did not understand, and the Mercenaries, explaining themselves more clearly, stated that they wanted the head of Hanno.

Several times a day they left their camp and walked to and fro below the walls, calling out to the Carthaginians that the Suffete's head was to be thrown over, and holding out their garments to receive it.

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

But for a final request, more insulting than the rest, the Great Council would perhaps have given way: the Mercenaries demanded maidens chosen from among the great families as brides for their chiefs. This was the idea of Spendius, and many thought it quite simple and perfectly feasible. But their presumption in seeking to ally themselves with Punic blood aroused the popular indignation, and they were bluntly informed that they would receive nothing more. Thereupon they loudly declared that they had been deceived; if their pay did not reach them within three days, they would themselves enter Carthage and take it.

The Mercenaries were by no means so completely perfidious as their enemies supposed. Hamilcar had made them extravagant promises, vague, it is true, but solemn and repeated promises nevertheless. They had had some grounds, on landing at Carthage, for believing that the town would be given up to them and its treasures divided amongst them, and when they saw that they would barely receive their pay, it was a disillusion for their pride as much as for their avarice.

Had not Denys, Pyrrhus, Agathocles, and the generals of Alexander afforded examples of wonderful fortunes? Hercules, by Canaanites confused with the sun, was the ideal which filled the horizon of an army. They knew that diadems had been worn by simple soldiers, and the Gaul in his oak-forest, the Ethiopian among his sands began to dream when they heard the echo of the fall of empires. But there was a nation always ready to turn the courage of others to account, and the thief



## Salamambo

expelled from his tribe, the parricide wandering about the roads, the criminal pursued by the Gods as the author of sacrilege—all who were desperate or starving—strove to reach the port where the recruiting officer of Carthage was enlisting soldiers. Commonly she kept her promises, but this time the intensity of her avarice had dragged her into a course no less dangerous than dishonourable. Numidia, Libya, nay, the whole of Africa was about to fall upon Carthage. The sea alone was open. There she was confronted by the Romans, and like a man attacked by murderers she felt death about her on every hand.

It was indeed needful to have recourse to Gisco, and the Barbarians accepted his mediation. One morning they saw the chains at the mouth of the harbour lowered, and three flat-bottomed boats passed through the canal of the Taenia and entered the lake.

On the first Gisco might be discerned, standing at the prow. Behind him rose a huge chest, higher than a catafalque, and provided with rings like pendent crowns. Next appeared the legion of the Interpreters, wearing the head-dress of a sphinx, and with parrots tattooed upon their breasts. Following them came friends and slaves, all unarmed, and in such numbers that their shoulders touched one another. Laden so heavily that they ran the risk of sinking, the three long barges came on amid the acclamations of the watching army.

No sooner had Gisco landed than the soldiers ran to meet him. He had a kind of rostrum erected with sacks, and declared that he would not go away

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

until every man had been paid in full. At that there were outbreaks of applause, and it was long before he was able to speak.

Then he condemned the ill deeds done by Carthage, and also those of the Barbarians; the fault lay with a few rebellious spirits, who had alarmed Carthage by their violence. The best proof of her intentions was that she had sent him, the unremitting adversary of the Suffete Hanno, to meet them. They were not to suppose the people so stupid as to wish to irritate brave men, or so ungrateful as to fail to appreciate their services; and Gisco set about paying the soldiers, making a commencement with the Libyans. Of the lists he made no use, since they had pronounced them false. Filing before him, those of one nationality at a time, they spread out their fingers to indicate the number of years they had served, and were marked, one after the other, on the left arm with green paint. The scribes drew the money from the open chest, and others pricked holes in a strip of lead with a stiletto.

A man slouched past with the ponderous gait of an ox. "Come up here beside me," said the Suffete, suspecting some imposture. "How many years have you served?"

"Twelve years," replied the Libyan.

Gisco slipped his fingers beneath the man's jaw, for sooner or later two callosities were caused there by the chin-piece of the helmet. These were called carobs, and to have "got the carobs" was a phrase signifying that a man was a veteran.

"Thief!" cried the Suffete. "What your face lacks I shall find on your shoulders!" and tearing

## Salamambo

open the man's tunic he laid bare his back, which was covered with scabs of blood ; he was a ploughman from Hippo-Zarytus. Jeers arose, and the man was beheaded.

At nightfall Spendius came and awoke the Libyans.

"When the Ligurians," he said, "when the Greeks, the Balearians, and the men from Italy have been paid, they will go home. But you will be left in Africa, dispersed among your tribes, defenceless ! That is when the Republic will take her vengeance. Beware of your journey home ! Are you going to swallow everything they tell you ? The two Suffetes are playing into one another's hands, and this one is deceiving you ! Remember the Island of Bones ; remember Xantippus, whom they sent back to Sparta on a rotten galley ! "

"What had we better do ? " they asked.

"Think it over ! " said Spendius.

The two following days were occupied in paying the men from Magdala, Leptis, and Hecatompylos. Spendius went about among the Gauls.

"They are paying the Libyans, after them the Greeks will be paid, then the Balearians, the Asiatics, and all the others. But you are so few, you will get nothing ! You will never see your own countries again ! There will be no ships for you ! They will kill you, to save your keep ! "

The Gauls went in search of the Suffete. Autharitus, the man he had injured in the gardens of Hamilcar, baited him with questions, but, vowing vengeance, he was thrust aside by the soldiers and lost to sight.

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

Demands and complaints increased rapidly. The more persistent forced their way into the Suffete's tent, endeavouring to move him by taking his hands and making him feel their toothless mouths, their emaciated arms, and the scars of their wounds. The unpaid became irritable, those who had received their due demanded a further sum for their horses, while the vagabonds and outlaws borrowed arms from the soldiers and declared that they were being forgotten. Swarms of men kept coming up every minute; tents gave way and collapsed, and the shouting multitude, crowded together between the ramparts of the camp, swayed backwards and forwards from the gates to the centre. When the tumult became excessive Gisco rested one elbow upon his ivory sceptre, and with fingers hidden in his beard stood motionless, watching the sea.

Frequently Matho went apart in order to converse with Spendius, afterwards resuming his place in front of the Suffete; and Gisco was perpetually conscious of his eyes, directed upon himself like a pair of flaming darts. Again and again they hurled at one another, above the heads of the crowd, insults which they could not hear. Meanwhile the distribution went on, and the Suffete found expedients to meet every obstacle.

The Greeks attempted to quibble over the exchange value of their money. He furnished explanations which induced them to withdraw without grumbling. The Negroes demanded the white shells which were employed as the medium of commercial exchange in the interior of Africa. He offered to send to Carthage for them, whereupon they accepted cash like the rest.

## Salamambo

But the Balearians had been promised something better. The Suffete replied that they were awaiting a whole caravan of women for them, but the journey was long and would occupy another six months; when they were in good condition and properly anointed with benzoin they would be sent by ship to the Balearic ports.

Suddenly Zarxas, now handsome and vigorous, leaped like a mountebank upon the shoulders of his friends, and pointing to the gate of Khamon within the city, shouted: "Have you kept any for the dead?"

The steel plates which lined it from top to bottom glittered in the last rays of the sun, and the Barbarians fancied they could detect upon it a stain of blood. Whenever Gisco attempted to speak their shouts broke out afresh, and at last he came solemnly down and shut himself up in his tent.

When he left it at sunrise, his interpreters, who slept outside, did not stir; they lay upon their backs, with staring eyes, bluish faces, and tongues peeping between their teeth. A white mucus trickled from their nostrils, their limbs were stiff as though during the night the cold had frozen every one, and about the neck of each was a little noose of rushes.

Thenceforward the rebellion proceeded unchecked. The murder of the Balearic slingers, of which Zarxas had reminded them, confirmed the suspicions entertained by Spendius. They fancied that the Republic was still trying to play them false. There must be an end of it! They would do without interpreters! Zarxas, with a sling around his head, sang war-songs; Autharitus brandished his great sword;

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

Spendius whispered a word here and supplied a dagger there. The strongest attempted to take their money themselves, while the least violent demanded that the distribution should proceed. No one now laid aside his arms, and the passions of all were concentrated upon Gisco in a storm of hatred.

Some stepped up beside him. So long as they shouted insults at the top of their voice they were heard in patience; but the moment they ventured upon a word on Gisco's behalf they were stoned, or beheaded with a sabre-stroke from behind. The pile of bags was more red than an altar.

After a meal, when the men had taken wine, they became terrible! This was a pleasure forbidden under pain of death in the Carthaginian armies, and they held their cups aloft in the direction of the city out of derision for her discipline. Then they turned once more to the slaves of the treasury and again began to kill. The word *strike*, though different in each language, was understood by all.

Gisco was well aware that his country was forsaking him, but in spite of her ingratitude he would not dishonour her. When they reminded him that vessels had been promised them he swore by Moloch that he would provide them himself, at his own expense, and pulling off his necklace of blue stones, he flung it among the crowd as a pledge of his oath.

Then the Africans made a claim for wheat, in accordance with the promises of the Great Council. Gisco spread out the accounts of the Syssitia, which were inscribed upon sheep-skins in violet pigment, and read an account of all that had been imported into Carthage, month by month and day by day.

## Salamambo

Suddenly he stopped, his eyes staring, as though he had discovered his death-warrant among the figures. The Ancients, in fact, had fraudulently understated them, and the wheat which had been sold during the most disastrous period of the war was priced at a figure so low that no one who was not blind could possibly credit it.

"Go on!" they shouted. "Louder! Ah, he is trying to invent a lie, the coward! Don't let us trust him!"

For some time he hesitated, but at last resumed his task. The soldiers accepted the figures of the Syssitia without the least suspicion that they were being deceived. Then the opulence which Carthage had enjoyed threw them into a state of frantic jealousy. They broke the chest of sycamore wood and found it three-parts empty. They had seen such sums issue from it that they concluded it was inexhaustible; Gisco must have buried a part of its contents in his tent. They scrambled over the sacks, Matho at their head, shouting, "The money! The money!" and at length Gisco replied—

"Get it from your general!"

He faced them in silence, with great yellow eyes and long face whiter than his beard. An arrow, caught by the feathers, hung to the golden ring in his ear, and a slender stream of blood dripped from his tiara to his shoulder.

At a gesture from Matho they all pressed forward. Gisco flung out his arms; Spendius bound his wrists with a running knot; someone knocked him over, and amid the tumult of the crowd which stumbled over the sacks he disappeared.

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

They pillaged his tent, but found nothing therein except the necessities of life ; then a closer search revealed three images of Tanit and, wrapped in the skin of a monkey, a black stone which had fallen from the moon. Many Carthaginians had insisted on bearing him company, men of consequence and all representative of the war party. They were dragged from the tents and cast into the pit devoted to garbage. There they were bound to massive stakes by iron chains attached to their waists, and were offered their food on the point of a spear. Autharitus, who kept guard over them, loaded them with abuse, but ignorant of his tongue they made no reply, and from time to time the Gaul dashed pebbles in their faces to make them cry out.

On the following day the army was overtaken by a kind of lethargy. Now that their wrath had subsided anxiety took possession of them. Matho became, a prey to a vague melancholy. He felt as though he had indirectly subjected Salamambo to insult. These members of the Plutocracy seemed to be an appanage, as it were, of her person. At night he sat himself beside their ditch, and in their moans he discovered something of the voice which filled his soul.

All, however, with one consent, laid the blame on the Libyans, who alone had been paid. But, simultaneously with the revival of national antipathies and individual aversions, there came a consciousness of the danger involved in giving way to them. Such an outrage would be followed by formidable reprisals. The vengeance of Carthage, therefore, must be fore-



## Salamambo

stalled. There were secret conclaves and harangues without end; everyone spoke, no one obtained a hearing, and Spendius, usually so talkative, met every suggestion with a shake of the head.

One evening he carelessly inquired of Matho whether or not there were any springs within the city.

"Not one!" answered Matho.

On the morrow Spendius led him down to the border of the lake.

"Master," said the escaped slave, "have you a dauntless heart? If so, I will show you the way into Carthage."

"How?" asked the other breathlessly.

"Swear to carry out my orders—to follow me like a shadow!"

Matho raised his arm towards the planet Chabar, and exclaimed—

"By Tanit, I swear!"

"To-morrow, then," resumed Spendius, "after sunset, you will wait for me beneath the aqueduct, between the ninth and tenth arches. You must have an iron pick, a helmet without a crest, and leather sandals."

The aqueduct of which he spoke—a stupendous work, enlarged at a later period by the Romans—crossed the entire isthmus in an oblique direction. Just as Rome had adopted the Punic galley, Carthage, notwithstanding her contempt for other nations, had appropriated this new invention, and its five tiers of stunted arches, rising one above the other, with buttresses at the base and lions' heads on the summit, terminated at the western portion of the

## Beneath the Walls of Carthage

Acropolis, where they disappeared beneath the town to pour almost a river of water into the reservoirs of Megara. •

There, at the appointed hour, Spendius found Matho. Fastening a kind of harpoon to the end of a rope, he whirled it about his head like a sling; the iron implement caught hold, and one behind the other they proceeded to climb the wall.

But when they had succeeded in scaling the first tier the hook fell back every time it was thrown, and in order to find some crevice they had to creep along the edge of the cornice, which was narrower, they found, with each succeeding tier of arches. Then the cord gave way, and several times it came near to breaking.

At last they reached the topmost platform. Now and again Spendius stooped down to feel the stones with his hand.

"This is the place," said he; "let us begin." And, bearing upon the pike which Matho had brought, they managed to remove one of the stones.

In the distance they caught sight of a troop of mounted men, galloping on horses without bridles. Their golden bracelets danced amid the flying folds of their cloaks. In front could be seen a man wearing a coronet of ostrich plumes and galloping with a lance in either hand.

"Nafr' Havas!" cried Matho.

"What of that!" replied Spendius, and he leapt into the hole which they had made by raising the flagstone. •

Matho, at his command, attempted to displace.

## Salamambo

one of the blocks, but could not use his elbows for want of room.

"We shall come back," said Spendius. "You go in front." And they ventured into the channel of water.

It was waist-deep. Presently they stumbled, and were obliged to swim; then they knocked their limbs against the walls owing to the narrowness of the conduit. The water flowed very nearly level with the flagstones which covered it, and they tore their faces. Then the current carried them away; an atmosphere more oppressive than that of a sepulchre pressed like a weight upon their chests, and stretched to their full length, knee against knee, their heads between their arms, choking, gasping, half dead, they rushed like arrows through the dark. Suddenly everything before them was enveloped in total blackness; the stream doubled its velocity, and they fell.

When they rose to the surface they lay for some minutes floating on their backs, breathing in the air with exquisite delight. The basins were divided by thick walls pierced by arches opening one behind another. Each reservoir was full, and the water stretched in a continuous sheet throughout their entire length. Through the vent-holes in the cupolas of the roof there entered a pale radiance which cast upon the ripples discs, as it were, of light; while the prevailing gloom grew denser towards the walls, making them recede to an indefinite distance. The slightest sound created a loud echo.

Starting to swim once more, Spendius and Matho passed through the opening of the arches, and

## Beneath the Walks of Carthage

crossed several chambers in a straight line. Two other rows of smaller basins ran parallel to these on each side. They missed their way, turned round, and came back. At last something offered a resistance to their feet; it was the pavement of the gallery which bordered the reservoirs.

Then, advancing with great precaution, they felt the wall for some means of egress, but their feet slipped, and they fell back into the deep water of the basins. They had to climb up again, then back they fell once more. A terrible fatigue overcame them; they felt as though their limbs had dissolved in the water as they swam; their eyes closed, and they were almost ready to succumb.

Then Spendius knocked his hand against the bars of a grating. They shook it; it gave way, and they found themselves on a flight of steps. At the top it was closed by a bronze door. With the point of a dagger they thrust aside the bar which was made to open from without, and suddenly they were bathed in the pure atmosphere of space.

The night was steeped in silence, the sky of limitless depth. The long lines of the walls were overhung by knots of trees; the entire city was asleep; the fires of the outposts gleamed like lost stars.

Spendius, who had passed three years in the *ergastulum*, was but imperfectly acquainted with his surroundings. Matho calculated that, to reach the palace of Hamilcar, they must bear to the left and traverse the Mappalia.

"No," said Spendius, "show me the way to the temple of Tanit."

Matho attempted to speak.

## Salamambo

“Remember!” said the escaped slave, and raising his arm he pointed to the glittering planet of Chabar. Matho turned in silence towards the Acropolis.

“They crept along the fences of Indian fig trees which bordered the paths, the water dripping from their limbs upon the sand, their wet sandals making no sound. Spendius, with eyes aflame like torches, peered into the bushes at every step, and strode along behind Matho, keeping his hands upon the two daggers which he wore strapped beneath his armpits by leather bands.

## V

### TANIT

**W**HEN they had passed beyond the gardens they were confronted by the wall of Megara, but they discovered a breach in the huge rampart and made their way through.

The ground sloped downwards, forming a kind of valley of considerable width, bare and exposed.

"Listen!" said Spendius. "And, first of all, you are to fear nothing. . . . I will fulfil my promise. . . ."

He paused and appeared to reflect, as though for the purpose of choosing his words. "Do you remember that time when, at sunrise, on Salamambo's terrace, I pointed to Carthage? We were strong then, but you would not listen!" And in a solemn voice he added, "Master, in the sanctuary of Tanit there is a mysterious veil, which fell from heaven, and now serves as the mantle of the Goddess."

"I know it," said Matho.

"It is itself divine," continued Spendius, "for it is a part of her. The Gods dwell where the things that represent them are found. It is because Carthage possesses it that Carthage is powerful." Then, speaking in his ear, "I have brought you with me in order to carry it off!"

## Sakamambo

Matho fell back in horror.

"Away! Find someone else! You will get no help from me in so vile a deed as that."

"But Tanit," replied Spendius, "is your enemy: she is persecuting you; you are perishing from her wrath. You will be avenged. She will obey you. You will become invincible—almost immortal."

Matho bent his head, and Spendius continued—

"We should be worsted; the army would dwindle away of itself. We have no hope of escape, help, or pardon! What chastisement can you fear from the Gods, since the source of their power will be in your hands? Would you rather die in suffering behind a bush, the night after a defeat, or in the flames of the faggots, amid the insults of the populace? Some day, master, you will enter Carthage between the colleges of the pontiffs, who will kiss your sandals; and if you still find the veil of Tanit a burden, you can restore it to its temple. Follow me! Come and take it."

Matho was consumed by a terrible desire. He longed at once to possess the veil and to refrain from the sacrilege. He told himself that perhaps there would be no need to take it in order to appropriate its virtue. He did not sound the depths of his thought, but paused at the point where it alarmed him.

"Let us go!" he said, and they strode rapidly away, side by side, without speaking.

The ground ascended again, and the dwellings became more numerous. They turned into the narrow streets where all was dark. Strips of esparto grass, used to close the doorways, flapped against

## Tanit

the walls. In an open space camels were chewing the cud before heaps of cut grass. Then they passed beneath a gallery crowned with foliage. A pack of dogs barked. But suddenly the space opened out, and they recognised the western face of the Acropolis. Below Byrsa lay a long, black mass ; it was the temple of Tanit, a collection of gardens and monuments, courts, and entrance-courts, bordered by a low wall of mortarless stone, which Spendius and Matho crossed.

This first enclosure contained a grove of plane trees, as a protection against plague and infection in the air. Here and there stood tents, where depilatory ointments, perfumes, garments, crescent-shaped cakes, and images of the Goddess, with models of the temple carved out of blocks of alabaster, were on sale during the daytime.

They had nothing to fear, for all rites were suspended on nights when the planet was invisible ; nevertheless Matho slackened his pace, and at the three ebony steps which led to the second enclosure he came to a halt.

"Go on !" said Spendius.

Pomegranates, almond trees, cypresses, and myrtles, motionless as leaves of bronze, followed one another in regular succession ; the path, paved with blue pebbles, crackled beneath their feet, and full-blown roses formed an arcade above it from end to end. They came to an oval aperture, protected by a grating, and Matho, awed by the silence, said to Spendius—

"This is where they mix the fresh water with the bitter."



## Salamambo

"I have seen all that," the escaped slave replied, "at the town of Maphug, in Syria." And mounting a flight of six silver steps, they entered the third enclosure.

In the midst stood a huge cedar, with its lower branches hidden beneath necklaces and scraps of cloth hung there by the faithful. A few steps further, and the façade of the temple stood revealed.

Two long porticoes, with architraves supported by short, thick pillars, flanked a quadrangular tower, the platform of which was adorned with a crescent moon. On the angles of the porticoes and at the four corners of the tower stood vases full of burning aromatics. The capitals were laden with colocynth and pomegranate. Pearls, arranged successively in the forms of intertwining loops, lozenges, and lines, followed one another upon the walls, and a fence of silver filigree formed a broad semicircle before the brass staircase which led down from the vestibule.

A conical stone stood at the entrance, between a small column of gold and another of emerald. Matho, as he passed it, kissed his right hand.

The first chamber was of great height ; its ceiling was pierced by numberless openings, and by raising the head one could see the stars. Beards and heads of hair, the firstfruits of adolescence, were accumulated in rush baskets which hung round the wall, and in the midst of the circular apartment the form of a woman rose from a sheath covered with paps. Plump, bearded, with downcast eyelids, she seemed to wear a smile, as she held her hands crossed beneath her huge abdomen, polished by the kisses of the crowd.

## Tanit

Then they found themselves once more in the open air, in a transverse corridor, where an altar of slender proportions was leaning against an ivory door. Through this there was no passage; none but the priests could open it; for a temple was not a meeting-place for the multitude, but the private dwelling of a divinity.

"The attempt is impossible," said Matho. "You did not fully consider it! Let us go back!"

Spendius was examining the walls. He wanted the veil, not because he had faith in its virtue (Spendius believed in nothing but the oracle), but from a conviction that when the Carthaginians saw themselves deprived of it they would lose all heart.

In search of some opening they passed round the back of the building. Little temples of varying form were visible beneath clumps of turpentine trees. Here and there stood a stone phallus, and great stags wandered about at their ease, kicking the fallen fir-cones with their cloven feet.

They retraced their steps between two long corridors which ran parallel to one another. Small cells stood open along the sides; cymbals and tambourines were hung from top to bottom of their columns of cedar. Outside lay women, sleeping upon mats. Their bodies, greasy with unguents, gave forth a scent of spices and of the dead fires of brasiers, and so covered were they with tattoo marks, necklaces, rings, vermillion, and antimony that but for the motion of their bosoms they might have been taken for recumbent idols. In a fountain, surrounded by lotus plants, swam fish like those of Salammbo; farther back a vine with branches

## Salamambo

of glass and grapes of emerald spread itself against the temple wall, and between the painted columns the scintillations of the precious stones threw fitful gleams of light upon the sleeping faces.

The close atmosphere confined by the partitions of cedar was stifling to Matho. All these symbols of fruitfulness, these perfumes, gleams of radiance, and human exhalations oppressed him. In flashes of mystic hallucination he thought of Salamambo, confusing her with the Goddess herself, and his love came forth the stronger, like great lotus flowers bursting into bloom above the depths of the waters.

Spendius was calculating what sum he could formerly have made by selling these women, and with a hasty glance he estimated the weight of their golden necklaces as he passed.

On this side, as upon the other, the temple was impenetrable, and they returned to the back of the first chamber. While Spendius searched and hunted, Matho, prostrate before the door, supplicated Tanit, entreating her not to permit the sacrilege, and attempting to appease her with tender words, as one appeals to an angry person.

Above the door Spendius perceived a narrow opening.

"Get up!" he said to Matho, and made him stand perfectly erect with his back against the wall. Then, placing one foot in his hands and the other upon his head, he reached the vent-hole, entered it and disappeared. Matho felt upon his shoulder the touch of a knotted cord, which Spendius had wound about his body before entrusting himself to the reservoirs, and clinging to it with both hands he

## Tanit

presently stood beside him in a great hall full of gloom.

An outrage of this sort was a thing entirely out of the common. The inadequacy of the means to prevent it was sufficient proof that it was held to be impossible ; sanctuaries were protected more by fear than by their walls. At every step Matho expected to meet his death.

A faint gleam, however, trembled amid the darkness, and, approaching it, they found it to be a lamp which was burning in a shell on the pedestal of a statue wearing the head-dress of the Kabiri. Her long blue robe was strewn with diamond discs, and chains buried in the stones of the floor bound her by the feet to the ground. Matho restrained a cry. "Ah! There she is! There she is! . . ." he stammered. Spendius took up the lamp to light the way.

"How impious you are!" murmured Matho, following him nevertheless.

The apartment they entered contained nothing but a painting in black, representing another woman. Her legs rose from the base of the wall to its summit ; her body occupied the entire ceiling. An enormous egg was suspended from her navel by a thread, and she extended head foremost down the opposite side of the wall to the level of the stone floor, upon which her fingers rested.

With the object of proceeding further, they drew aside a piece of tapestry, but a gust of wind extinguished the light, and they wandered hither and thither, lost amid the intricacies of the architecture. Suddenly they felt something strangely soft beneath

## Salamambo

their feet ; sparks glittered and flashed ; they were walking amid fire. Spendius touched the floor with his fingers and discovered that it was carefully carpeted with lynx-skins. Then it seemed as though a great wet rope, cold and clammy, were gliding between their legs. Slits pierced in the wall gave admission to thin pencils of light, and advancing by the aid of their uncertain gleams, they at last made out a great black serpent, which darted quickly away and disappeared.

"Let us fly!" cried Matho. "It is she! I feel her; she is coming."

"No, no!" replied Spendius. "The temple is empty."

A dazzling light made them lower their eyes. Then, all about them, they perceived a multitude of creatures, lean-flanked, panting, and showing their claws, mingled together one above another in a weird and frightful confusion. There were serpents with feet and bulls with wings, man-headed fish were devouring fruits, flowers bloomed in the maws of crocodiles, and elephants with uplifted trunks sailed proudly, like eagles, across an azure sky. Their limbs, which were either too few or too many, were strained in a frightful effort, and their tongues thrust out as though they would fain yield up their souls. Every form was there, as if the germ-repository had suddenly hatched and burst asunder, pouring forth its entire contents over the sides of the hall.

Arranged about it in a circle were twelve globes of blue crystal, supported by monsters resembling tigers. Their eyeballs started from their heads like

## Tanit

those of snails, and bending their clumsy loins, they turned towards the further end of the hall, where Rabbet the supreme, the All-prolific, the last-imagined, shone resplendent on an ivory car.

Scales, feathers, flowers, and birds rose about her to her waist. For earrings she wore silver cymbals which smote against her cheeks. Her great, fixed eyes looked straight at the spectator, and a luminous stone set in her forehead in the form of an obscene symbol was reflected in mirrors of copper above the door so as to illumine the whole room.

A single step, and one of the flagstones yielded beneath Matho's feet. Forthwith the globes began to revolve, and the monsters to roar! Music arose, melodious and sonorous as the harmony of the spheres; the stormy soul of Tanit streamed forth like a flood. She was about to rise, tall as the room itself, with open arms, when suddenly the monsters closed their jaws, and the globes of crystal ceased to revolve. A mournful cadence floated, lingering, on the air, and at length died away.

"The veil?" said Spendius.

It was nowhere to be seen. Where, then, could it be? How were they to find it? What if the priests had hidden it? Matho felt a pang of anguish at his heart, as though his faith had played him false.

"This way!" whispered Spendius. Led by an inspiration, he drew Matho behind the car of the Goddess, where a narrow opening, a cubit in width, cleft the wall from top to bottom.

They made their way into a small circular chamber, so lofty that it seemed like the interior of a column,

## Salamambo

In the centre was a large black stone, hemispherical in shape, like a tambourine ; above it flames were burning, and behind stood a cone of ebony, with a head and two arms.

But beyond it was what one might have taken for a cloud wherein stars were glittering ; faces were visible in the depths of its folds--Eschmoun, with the Kabiri, some of the monsters they had seen already, the sacred animals of the Babylonians, and others which they did not know. Blue as night, yellow as dawn, crimson as the sun, multitudinous, sparkling, diaphanous, and unsubstantial, it passed like a mantle beneath the face of the idol and, rising on either side, spread itself upon the wall, to which it was attached by the corners. It was the garment of the Goddess--the holy zaïmph which none might see.

Both of the men turned pale.

"Take it !" said Matho at last.

Spendius did not hesitate. Leaning on the idol, he detached the veil, which sank to the ground. Matho laid his hand upon it, then put his head through the neck, then wrapped it about his body, and stretched out his arms to view it the better.

"Let us go !" said Spendius.

Matho, breathing heavily, remained with his eyes fixed upon the floor. Suddenly he exclaimed--

"What if I went to her palace? I fear her beauty no longer! What could she do against me? Now am I more than man. I would go through flames; walk through the sea! I feel a sense of boundless energy. Salamambo! Salamambo! I am your master!"

## Tanit.

His voice thundered. He seemed to Spendius loftier in stature, transfigured.

Steps drew near; a door opened and a man appeared—a priest, with a high cap, staring wide-eyed. Before he could move, Spendius had rushed upon him, and throwing his arms about him, had plunged his two daggers into his sides. His head crashed upon the pavement.

For some time they remained listening, motionless as the corpse. Nothing was heard save the murmur of the wind through the half-open door.

This led to a narrow passage. Spendius entered it, Matho following, and they found themselves almost immediately in the third enclosure, between the lateral porches which formed the dwellings of the priests. Behind the cells there must be some shorter passage out. They hurried onwards.

Crouching beside the fountain, Spendius washed his blood-stained hands. The women slumbered; the emerald vine gleamed; and again they pressed on.

But beneath the trees there was something running behind them, and Matho, who carried the veil, felt several times that it was being gently pulled from below. It was a great baboon; one of those which lived in freedom within the precincts of the Goddess. It clung to the mantle as though it had been sensible of the theft; yet they dared not strike for fear of making it cry the louder. Suddenly, however, its anger subsided, and it trotted along close beside them, swaying its body and swinging its long arms. Then, on reaching the fence, it sprang with a bound into a palm tree.



## Salamambo

Once free of the last enclosure, they directed their steps towards Hamilcar's palace, Spendius understanding that it was useless to attempt to dissuade Matho.

They passed by way of the Tanners' street, the square of Muthumbal, the grass market, and the open space known as Cynasyn. As they turned the corner of a wall a man, alarmed by the glittering fabric gliding onwards through the darkness, started back.

"Hide the zaïmph!" said Spendius.

Others crossed their path without observing them. At last they recognised the houses of Megara.

The beacon, erected on the summit of the cliff in the background, lit up the sky with a great red glow, and the palace with its terraces rising one above the other, threw its shadow upon the gardens like a monstrous pyramid. They made their entrance by the hedge of jujube trees, cutting their way through the branches with their daggers.

Everything still bore the marks of the Mercenaries' feast. The enclosures were broken down, the water channels were empty, the doors of the ergastulum stood open. In the neighbourhood of the kitchens and cellars there was no one to be seen. The silence, broken only by the hoarse breathing of the elephants as they fretted against their shackles, or the crackling of the beacon, now blazing with a pile of aloë-faggots, filled them with astonishment.

Meanwhile Matho kept repeating—

"Where is she? I want to see her! Show me the way!"

"It is a mad thing to do!" said Spendius. "She

## Tanit

will call, her slaves will hurry to her assistance, and all your strength will not prevent you from being killed ! ”

In this manner they reached the staircase of the galleys. Matho, raising his head, fancied he perceived, far aloft, the radiance of a soft, uncertain glow. Spendius attempted to restrain him, but he sprang up the steps.

And now, finding himself once more upon the spot where he had seen her before, the intervening days were blotted from his memory. It was but a moment ago that she was chanting between the tables ; she had vanished, and ever since he had not ceased to climb the staircase. The sky above him was covered with stars ; the entire horizon was occupied by sea ; with every step the immensity of space stretched wider and wider about him, and he continued his ascent with the strange facility that one experiences in dreams.

The rustle of the veil as it swept the stones reminded him of his new power, but in the extravagance of his hope he could no longer tell what he ought to do, and the uncertainty made him timid. Pressing his face from time to time against the quadrangular window spaces of the closed apartments, he fancied that in several he could discern people asleep. The topmost story, smaller in area than the rest, formed, as it were, a cubical block on top of the terraces. Matho walked slowly round it.

A milk-white light pervaded the thin sheets of talc which filled the little openings in the wall, and from their symmetrical arrangement they appeared in the darkness like rows of fine pearls. He recog-

## Salamambo

nised the red door with the black cross, and his heart beat still more quickly ; he would have been glad to make his escape. He pushed the door, and it opened. A lighted lamp shaped like a galley was hanging at the farther end of the chamber, and three rays, issuing from its silver keel, flickered on the lofty panelling, which was painted red with black stripes. The ceiling was a confusion of small beams, with topaz and amethyst inlaid in the knots amidst their gilding. Along the two longer sides of the apartment ran a very low couch constructed of thongs of white leather, while in the thickness of the wall above it were semi-circular arches of shell-like form, whence some kind of drapery was trailing on the floor.

Round an oval basin ran a single step of onyx, and on the edge, beside a pitcher of alabaster, rested a pair of delicate slippers of serpent's skin. Beyond them lay the glimmer of a moist footprint, and the air was pervaded with the dying traces of exquisite odours.

Matho stepped lightly over the stones of the floor, which were inlaid with gold, glass, and mother-of-pearl ; and despite their highly polished surface it seemed to him that his feet sank in as though he were walking upon sand. Behind the lamp he had caught sight of some square, azure-coloured object of considerable size, supported by four ascending cords, and bending forward, he advanced with parted lips.

Flamingoes' wings, attached to handles of black coral, were lying about among purple cushions and tortoise-shell combs, cedar-wood boxes, and spatulas

## Tanjit

of ivory. Antelopes' horns were encircled by rings and bracelets, and in the opening of the wall earthenware vases were being aired in the wind on a trellis of reeds. Several times he knocked his feet, for the variations in the level of the floor divided the chamber, as it were, into a succession of apartments. At its farther end a silver balustrade ran round a carpet strewn with painted flowers. At last he stood beside the hanging couch, near an ebony stool, by aid of which it might be reached.

But the light did not shine beyond the edge, and the shadow, like a great curtain, revealed nothing but a corner of the red mattress with the point of a little bare foot resting on its ankle. Very gently Matho drew the lamp towards him.

She was sleeping with one hand supporting her cheek and the other arm relaxed. The ringlets of her hair lay about her in such profusion that she seemed to be reclining on black plumes, and her full white tunic, following the sinuous lines of her figure, flowed, in soft, undulating folds, to her feet. Her half-closed lids afforded a glimpse of her eyes. The curtains, hanging straight down, cast a bluish haze about her, and with the motion which her breathing imparted to the cords of her couch, she seemed to be swayed to and fro in the air. The droning of a large mosquito made itself heard. Matho, standing motionless, held the silver galley with arm outstretched, when all at once the mosquito-net flared up and vanished, and Salammbo awoke.

The blaze had died out of itself. She did not speak. The light from the lamp rose and fell on the panelling in luminous, wavering lines.

## Salamambo

"What is it?" said she.

"It is the veil of the Goddess," he answered.

"The veil of the Goddess!" cried Salamambo, and supporting herself on her clenched hands, she leaned from the couch, trembling.

"For you," he continued, "I have visited the innermost places of the sanctuary to seek it! Look! The entire surface of the zaïmph glittered with coruscations.

"Do you remember?" said Matho. "At night you appeared in my dreams, but I could not interpret the mute bidding of your eyes!" She lowered one foot to the ebony stool. "Had I understood I should have come with all speed; I should have abandoned the army; I should not have left Carthage. To obey you I would descend to the realm of the Shades by the cavern of Hadrumentum! . . . Forgive me! It was as though the weight of mountains pressed me down; yet something led me on! I tried to come to you! But for the Gods, should I ever have dared? . . . Let us go! You must follow me! Or if you will not, I will remain. What is it to me? Drown my soul in the sighing of your breath! Let me kiss your hands till my lips are bruised and broken!"

"Let me see!" she said. "Closer! Closer!"

Day was breaking, staining the talc-sheets in the walls a vinous red. Salamambo, half-swooning, supported herself by the cushions of the couch.

"I love you!" cried Matho.

"Give it me!" she faltered, and they drew nearer together.

Still she advanced, dressed in her long white

## Taniz

flowing robe, her great eyes fixed upon the veil. Matho, dazzled, as he gazed upon her, by her lustrous beauty, held the zaïmph towards her, and was about to fold her to his breast. She threw out her arms. Then suddenly she stood still, and they remained gazing at each other, with parted lips.

She did not understand what he sought, yet a horror took possession of her; her delicate eyebrows rose, her lips opened, she shuddered. At last she struck one of the brazen gongs which hung to the corners of the red mattress.

"Help! Help!" she cried. "Begone, desecrator! Infamous — accursed wretch! Hither, Taanach, Kroum, Ewa, Micipsa, Schaoul!"

In the wall, between the earthenware pitchers, appeared the terrified countenance of Spendius, and from his lips came the words, "Fly! They are coming!"

The staircases shook beneath a mighty tumult which swarmed upwards, and a crowd of people—women, slaves, and attendants—rushed into the chamber, armed with pikes, clubs, swords, and daggers. The sight of a man seemed to paralyse them with indignation; the women-servants began to wail as for the dead, and the eunuchs grew pale beneath their dark skin.

Matho stood behind the balustrade. Wrapped in the zaïmph, he seemed like a planetary deity in the midst of the firmament. The slaves were about to fling themselves upon him, but they were checked by Salammbo.

"Touch it not! It is the mantle of the Goddess!"

## Salamambo

She had retreated to a corner, but she took a step towards him, and with bare arm outstretched—

"Curses be on your head," she cried, "despoiler of Tanit! Hatred, vengeance, slaughter, and torment! May you be torn in pieces by Gurzil, god of battles; strangled by Mastiman, god of the dead; burned by that Other, whom it is not lawful to name!"

Matho uttered a cry, as though wounded by a sword-thrust. "Begone! Begone!" she repeated again and again.

The crowd of servants parted, and Matho, with downcast head, passed slowly through their midst; but at the door he stopped, for the fringe of the zaïmph had caught upon one of the golden stars with which the stones of the floor were set. He detached it roughly with a jerk of his shoulder, and descended the flights of stairs.

Spendius, bounding on from terrace to terrace, and leaping hedges and ditches, had made his escape from the gardens. He reached the beacon's foot, where, owing to the inaccessibility of the cliff, the wall came to an end. Advancing to the edge, he stretched himself upon his back, and slid, feet foremost, from top to bottom; then he swam as far as the Cape of Tombs, made a wide *détour* by way of the salt lagoon, and at nightfall entered, once more the Barbarian camp.

The sun had risen, and Matho, casting fierce glances about him, made his way down the paths, like a retreating lion.

An uncertain clamour reached his ears, arising first of all from the palace, then beginning again

## Tapit

at a distance, in the direction of the Acropolis. Some said that the treasure of the Republic stored in the temple of Moloch had been stolen; others spoke of a murdered priest. Elsewhere the Barbarians were believed to have entered the town.

Matho, not knowing how to pass beyond the circuit of the walls, walked straight before him. He was observed, and an uproar arose. Everyone understood, and the first feeling of consternation was followed by a tempest of rage.

On came the multitude, from the heart of the Mappalia, from the heights of the Acropolis, from the catacombs, from the borders of the lake. Patricians left their palaces, tradesmen their shops; women deserted their children; swords, axes, and staves were caught up; but the obstacle which had stood in the way of Salammbo arrested them all. How was the veil to be recovered? The mere sight of it was a crime; it was of the nature of the Gods, and its contact occasioned death.

On the peristyles of the temples priests were wringing their hands in despair. The guards of the Legion galloped hither and thither, and people climbed upon the houses, on the terraces, on the shoulders of huge statues, and into the rigging of ships. Yet still he came on, while at every step their anger grew, and with it their terror. The streets were deserted at his approach, and the torrent of men in flight surged back on either side to the summit of the walls. Everywhere he discerned nothing but outstretched fists, chattering teeth, and eyes which glared as though they would devour



## Salamambo

him, while the curses of Salamambo, repeated on every hand, rang in his ears.

Suddenly a long arrow whistled past him, then another, accompanied by the whirr of stones; but the missiles, ill-directed from fear of hitting the zaimph, passed over his head. Moreover, holding the veil now to the right, now to the left, sometimes in front and sometimes behind, he made use of it as a shield, against which they could devise no expedient. Quicker and yet quicker he walked, making his way through the unoccupied streets. They were obstructed with ropes, chariots, and snares, and each time he was turned aside he retraced his steps. Reaching at last the square of Khamon, where the Balearic Islanders had perished, he paused, and grew pale as one who faces death. This time it was all over with him, and the multitude clapped their hands.

He ran to the huge gate, which was closed. It was of great height, heart of oak throughout, studded with iron nails, and lined with brass. Matho threw himself against it, and the people stamped with joy at the sight of his impotent fury; thereupon, taking his sandal, he spat upon it, and with it lashed the unyielding panels. The whole city yelled; the veil was now forgotten, and they were about to trample him down. His great eyes wandered over the crowd in an unseeing gaze; the throbbing of his temples deafened him; he felt himself overtaken by the torpor of the intoxicated. Suddenly he caught sight of the long chain which, when pulled, caused the gate to swing open. With a leap he clutched it, straightened his arms, braced himself

## Taniṭ

with his feet, and at last the mighty doors swung ajar.

Once outside, he took the great zaïmph from his neck, and held it above his head to the utmost extent of his reach. Borne aloft by the sea-breeze the fabric glittered in the sunlight, with its colours, its jewels, and the figures of its gods. Holding it thus Matho traversed the entire length of the plain as far as the soldiers' tents, while the people on the walls watched the fortune of Carthage depart.

## VI

### HANNO

**I** OUGHT to have brought her away with me," he told Spendius that evening. "What I should have done was to seize and carry her by force out of the house! No one would have dared to raise a finger against me!"

Spendius was not listening. Stretched on his back he was resting in exquisite enjoyment beside a great jar of honey water, wherein from time to time he plunged his head to quench his thirst with deeper draughts.

"What is to be done?" resumed Matho. . . .  
"How am I to get back into Carthage?"

"I don't know," said Spendius.

His apathy exasperated Matho. "Why it is you," he cried, "who are to blame! You drag me thither and then you forsake me, coward that you are! Why should I obey you? Do you think you are my master? Pander! Slave! Son of a slave!" And grinding his teeth he raised his huge hand against Spendius.

The Greek made no reply. An earthenware lamp was burning against the pole of the tent, whereon the zaimph hung, glittering, amidst the armour.

Suddenly Matho put on his cōthurni, fastened his brazen coat of mail, and took his helmet.

## Hanno

"Where are you going?" asked Spendius.

"I am going back! Let me alone! I will bring her with me! And if they show themselves I will crush them like vipers! She shall die, Spendius! Yes; I will kill her!" he repeated; "I will kill her, you shall see!"

But Spendius, who was listening intently, hastily tore down the zaïmph, and throwing it into a corner, covered it with a heap of fleeces. The murmur of voices made itself heard, torches gleamed, and Narr' Havas, followed by about a score of men, entered the tent.

They wore white woollen cloaks, long daggers, leather collars, wooden earrings, and shoes of hyena-skin; and, pausing on the threshold, they leaned upon their lances like shepherds resting. Narr' Havas presented the finest appearance of all; leathern thongs braided with pearls were bound about his slender arms; the gold circlet which confined his ample robe about his head retained also an ostrich plume which swept the back of his shoulder; his teeth were displayed in a perpetual smile; his eyes seemed sharp as arrows, and about his whole person there was something at once observant and alert.

He announced that he came to join the Mercenaries, for his kingdom had long been threatened by the Republic. It was to his interest, therefore, to assist the Barbarians, and he might be of service to them as well.

"I will provide you with elephants—my forests are full of them—with wine, oil, barley, dates, pitch and sulphur for sieges, twenty thousand foot and ten

## Salamambo

thousand horses. If I address myself to you, Matho, it is because the possession of the zaïmph has given you the position of chief. Moreover," he added, "we are old friends."

Matho, however, was contemplating Spendius, who sat on his sheep-skins and listened, giving little nods with his head in token of assent. Narr' Havas continued his speech, calling the Gods to witness and cursing Carthage. In the course of his imprecations he broke a short spear. Simultaneously all his men raised a loud howl, and Matho, carried away by this display of wrath, cried out that he accepted the alliance.

Thereupon they brought a white bull and a black sheep, a symbol of the day and a symbol of the night. They cut the animals' throats by the side of a pit, wherein, when it was full of blood, they plunged their hands. Then Narr' Havas laid his open hand upon Matho's breast, and Matho his upon the breast of Narr' Havas. This mark they duplicated upon the cloth of their tents. Afterwards they spent the remainder of the night in eating; the remains of the meal, with the skin, the bones, the horns and the hoofs, being burnt.

An immense ovation had greeted Matho when he returned with the veil of the Goddess. Those even who were not of Canaanite race felt, in their vague enthusiasm, that a Great Spirit had come among them. As for seeking to obtain possession of the zaïmph, no one thought of such a thing; the mysterious manner in which he had secured it was sufficient, in the Barbarian mind, to make him its lawful owner. Such was the feeling of the soldiers

## Hanno

of African race. The others, whose hatred towards Carthage was not of such long standing, did not know what course to take. Had they possessed ships, they would have sailed away at once. •

Spendius, Narr' Havas, and Matho despatched men to all the tribes in Punic territory.

These peoples were being gradually ruined by Carthage, who levied exorbitant taxes from them and punished delay and even murmurs with fetters, the cross, or the executioner's axe. They were compelled to grow such crops as the Republic required, and to supply what she demanded; no one was allowed to possess a weapon; when a village revolted its inhabitants were sold into slavery, and governors were valued, like wine-presses, according to the amount they could extort. Next, beyond the districts immediately subject to Carthage, lay the scattered allies who paid but a moderate tribute; while behind these roamed the nomads, who could be let loose upon them. By this system her harvests were always abundant, her breeding stations skilfully managed, her plantations superb. Ninety-two years later the elder Cato, an authority on the subject of agriculture and slave labour, was amazed at the results she obtained, and the appeal for her destruction which he used to repeat in Rome was but the outburst of jealous cupidity.

Exactions had redoubled during the last war, inasmuch that nearly every town in Libya had surrendered to Regulus. As a punishment they had been despoiled of a thousand talents, twenty thousand cattle, three hundred sacks of gold-dust, and considerable advances of grain, while the tribal chiefs had been crucified or thrown to lions.

## Salamambo

Tunis, above all, regarded Carthage with abhorrence! Older than the capital, she could not forgive her greatness, and crouching in the mud, at the waterside, within sight of her walls, watched her like some venomous beast. Deportations, massacres and epidemics had not reduced her to impotence. She had lent support to Archagathus, the son of Agathocles, and from her the Eaters-of-unclean-things obtained an immediate supply of arms.

The messengers had not set forth, before there was a universal outburst of joy throughout the provinces. Stewards of country houses and the civil servants of the Republic were promptly strangled in the baths; old-fashioned weapons were brought forth from the caves in which they had been hidden; swords were forged from the metal of ploughs; children sharpened spears upon the doorsteps, and the women gave their necklaces, rings, earrings—anything that might aid in the destruction of Carthage. To that object all wished to contribute. Bundles of lances accumulated in the towns like sheaves of maize. Cattle were sent, and money. Matho quickly paid off all arrears due to the Mercenaries, an idea which, conceived by Spendius, led to his comrade's appointment as commander-in-chief or schalischim of the Barbarians.

Meanwhile reinforcements of men kept pouring in. The first to make their appearance were those of indigenous race, who were followed by the slaves from country districts. Caravans of Negroes were seized and armed, and merchants on their way to Carthage joined the Barbarians in the hope of a

## Hanno

more certain profit. Numerous bands were constantly arriving, and the increase of the army was watched from the heights of the Acropolis.

The guards of the Legion were posted as sentinels along the roof of the aqueduct, and near them, at regular distances, stood brass cauldrons in which quantities of asphalte were boiling. In the plain below, among the crowd, all was stir and tumult. They were in a state of indecision, being a prey to the perplexity which always affects Barbarians when they find themselves face to face with fortified walls.

Utica and Hippo-Zarytus refused their alliance. Phœnician colonies like Carthage, they were self-governed, and in the treaties concluded by the Republic always had clauses inserted to distinguish them from her. They respected their stronger sister nevertheless, for she protected them, and they did not for a moment believe that a mob of Barbarians was capable of vanquishing her; they would, on the contrary, be exterminated themselves. They wished to remain neutral, and to live in peace.

But their position rendered them indispensable. Utica, situated at the extremity of a gulf, was conveniently situated for bringing outside assistance into Carthage. If Utica alone were captured, Hippo-Zarytus, six hours farther off along the coast, would take her place, and, thus provisioned, the capital would be proof against assault.

Spendius wished the siege to be undertaken at once. To this Narr' Havas was opposed; their first move ought to be against the frontier. The veterans, and Mathô himself, were of the same



## Salamambo

opinion ; it was decided that Spendius should proceed to attack Utica, and Matho Hippo-Zarytus ; the third army corps, with Tunis, as its base, would occupy the plain of Carthage, A'utharitus taking the command. As for Narr' Havas, he was to return to his own kingdom in order to obtain elephants and to scour the roads with his cavalry.

The women complained loudly of this decision ; they coveted the jewels of the Carthaginian ladies. The Libyans also raised objections. They had been sent for to attack Carthage, and now they were to leave her ! The soldiers set off almost alone. Matho was in command of his own comrades, as also of the Iberians, the Lusitanians, the men from the West and from the islands, while all those who spoke Greek had claimed Spendius as their leader, by reason of his sagacity.

Great was the astonishment when the army was seen to put itself suddenly in motion ; then it wound along the road to Utica, beneath Mount Ariana, beside the sea. A portion remained before Tunis, and the remainder disappeared, to come once more into sight on the opposite side of the gulf, at the edge of the forest, within which it vanished.

They numbered, possibly, eighty thousand men. The two Tyrian cities would make no resistance, and they would return towards Carthage. Already assailed by a considerable force, which occupied the base of the isthmus, she would shortly perish of starvation, for the citizens, unlike those of Rome, contributed nothing, and without the assistance of the provinces she could not exist. Carthage was wanting in political genius. Her everlasting thirst for

## Hanno

gain denied her the prudence which loftier ambitions inspire. A galley anchored on the Libyan sands, she maintained her position there by means of toil. The nations roared about her like waves, and her formidable mechanism quivered at the shock of the slightest storm.

The exchequer was exhausted by the Roman war, and by the waste and loss incurred by bargaining with the Barbarians. Soldiers, however, must be had, and there was not a government from which the Republic could obtain credit! Ptolemy had but lately refused her two thousand talents. The rape of the veil, moreover, as Spendius had truly foreseen, had destroyed her self-confidence.

Yet this nation, conscious of the hatred of those about her, clasped her money and her gods to her heart, and kept her patriotism alive by the very constitution of her government.

In the first place, while power was dependent on the will of all, no individual was sufficiently strong to appropriate it. Private debts were treated as public debts; men of Canaanite race enjoyed the monopoly of commerce, and by increasing the profits of piracy by those of usury and getting the utmost that was to be got out of the land, the slaves, and the poor, fortunes were occasionally made. Wealth alone was the key to every magistracy, and although riches perpetuated themselves in the same families, the oligarchy was tolerated because there was the hope that one might become a member of it.

The merchant guilds, which drew up the laws, also elected the inspectors of finance, who, on the

## Salammbo

expiration of their term of office, appointed the hundred members of the Council of the Ancients, and were themselves subject to the Great Assembly, or general gathering of all the wealthy. As for the two Suffetes, shadows of kings and less than consuls, they were chosen on the same day from two different families. All sorts of enmities were fostered between them, that they might mutually weaken one another. They could not deliberate concerning war, and if they were defeated the Great Council condemned them to be crucified.

The strength of Carthage therefore had its source in the Syssitia, that is to say, in a great court in the centre of Malqua; the very spot, it was said, where the first boat-load of Phœnician sailors had come to land, the sea having retreated considerably since that time. The Syssitia were a collection of small chambers of an antique type of architecture, built of the trunks of palm trees with corners of stone, and separated one from another in such a manner that each different company might be housed by itself. There the wealthy gathered together the whole day long in order to discuss their own interests and those of the government, from the quest of pepper to the extermination of Rome. Three times a month they had their couches carried up to the lofty terrace which ran round the wall of the court, and from below they might be seen seated at table above, without cothurni or cloaks, the diamonds on their fingers hovering above the provisions and their great earrings swinging forward between the flagons,—all fat and robust, half nude, joyous, laughing and eating against the blue back-

## Hanno

ground of heaven, like great sharks disporting themselves in the sea.

At present, however, they were unable to disguise their anxiety; they were too pale; and the crowd which awaited them at the doors attended them as far as their mansions in order to learn some news from them. All houses were closed, as during epidemics of plague; the streets became suddenly full and as suddenly empty; men climbed the Acropolis, and hurried down to the harbour; and every night the Great Council held debate. At last the people were called together on the square of Khamon, and it was decided to entrust the matter to Hanno, the victor of Hecatompylos.

Hanno was religious, crafty, and destitute of any feeling for men of African blood—a true Carthaginian. His income was equal to that of the house of Barca. No one was so experienced in matters of administration.

He ordained that all able-bodied citizens should be enlisted, placed catapults upon the towers, demanded the provision of enormous supplies of arms, went so far as to order the construction of fourteen galleys, which were not required, and insisted that a record should be kept, in which everything was carefully written down. He had himself carried to the arsenal, to the beacon, and to the treasury of the temples; his great litter was always to be seen swaying from step to step of the flight which led to the Acropolis; and at night, in his palace, unable to sleep, he roared military commands in a terrible voice, to prepare himself for battle.

Everyone became brave from sheer excess of

## Salamambo

terror. At cock-crow the Rich fell into line along the *via Mappaliensis*, and turning up their robes, practised spear-drill. But, lacking an instructor, they fell to disputing among themselves, sat down breathless upon the tombs, and then began again. Many even subjected themselves to a system of diet. Some, supposing that strength was to be acquired by a generous regimen, ate to repletion, while others, embarrassed by their corpulence, weakened themselves by fasting in order to become thin.

Utica had already frequently appealed to Carthage for assistance. But Hanno would not think of starting so long as a single screw was wanting to the engines of war. Another three months were wasted in fitting out the one hundred and twelve elephants which were housed in the ramparts. These were the conquerors of Regulus, idolised by the people; old friends which could not be treated too well. By Hanno's instructions their brass breastplates were recast, their tusks gilded, their towers enlarged, and they were fitted with heavily fringed caparisons, cut from the finest purple. Lastly, as their drivers were called Indians (after the first, who doubtless came from India), he directed that they should all be attired in Indian fashion, namely, with a white padded turban about their temples, and little drawers of fine linen folded crossways in such manner as to resemble the two valves of a shell attached to the haunches.

The army of Autharitus was still before Tunis. It lay behind a wall built of the mud from the lake, and defended along the top by thorny brushwood. Here and there stood tall poles, upon which Negroes had fixed hideous faces—human masks fashioned

## Hanno

with the feathers of birds, and the heads of jackals or of serpents—gaping at the enemy in order to frighten him ; and the Barbarians, supposing that by this means they had rendered themselves invincible, danced, wrestled, and practised sleight of hand, in the belief that Carthage must perish ere long. Embarrassed, as it was, by herds of cattle and by women, this rabble would have been crushed with ease by anyone except Hanno. Of military drill, moreover, they understood nothing whatever, and Autharitus, in his discouragement, no longer insisted upon it.

When he passed, rolling his great blue eyes, they stood aside. Then, reaching the margin of the lake, he drew back his sealskin blouse, and plunged his long red hair in the water, after untying the cord by which it was confined. He regretted not having deserted to the Romans with the two thousand Gauls from the temple of Eryx.

Often, at noon, the sun suddenly lost its radiance, and the gulf and the open sea seemed at once to become motionless as molten lead. A cloud of brown dust, extending perpendicularly aloft, swept eddying onwards ; the palm trees bent, the sky was obscured, stones were heard smiting the animals' haunches, and the Gaul, with his lips against the apertures of his tent, panted hoarsely from exhaustion and from melancholy. He thought of the scent of the pastures on autumn mornings, of the snowflakes, of the lowing of wild oxen lost in the mist, and closing his eyelids, fancied he could perceive the lights of the low-thatched cabins flickering above the swamps in the depth of the forest.

## Salamambo

Others there were who regretted their native country, though one not so remote. The Carthaginian prisoners, in fact, could make out the awnings stretched across the courts of their houses, on the slopes of Byrsa, across the gulf. But there were sentinels constantly pacing round them. They were all bound to a common chain. Each wore an iron collar, and the crowd was never tired of coming to watch them. Women showed little children their fine robes, now hanging in rags upon their emaciated limbs.

Whenever Autharitus observed Gisco he was seized with frenzy at the recollection of the insult he had put upon him. But for the oath he had taken to Narr' Havas, he would have killed him. Then he re-entered his tent, drank a liquor brewed from barley and cumin until he was senseless from intoxication, to awake afterwards in the open sunlight, consumed by a frightful thirst.

Matho, meanwhile, was besieging Hippo-Zarytus. But the town was protected by a lake which communicated with the sea. It had three lines of defence, and along the heights which commanded it ran a wall fortified with towers. Never before had Matho had charge of a similar undertaking. He was beset, moreover, by the thought of Salamambo, lost in dreams in which he enjoyed the pleasures of her beauty with the exquisite delight of a vengeance which left him intoxicated with pride. He longed to see her with a craving which was at once bitter, fierce, and lasting. He thought even of offering to take a flag of truce, in the hope that once within Carthage he might manage

## Hanno

to see her. Frequently he gave orders to sound the signal for attack, and waiting for nothing, rushed out along the mole which was in course of construction in the sea. He tore up the stones with his hands, dealing blows, felling men to the ground, and delivering sword-thrusts on every hand. The Barbarians charged in headlong confusion, ladders broke with a mighty crash, and masses of men were precipitated into the water which surged in red waves against the walls. At last the uproar grew less, and the soldiers withdrew for a fresh onslaught. Matho would seat himself beyond the space where the tents were pitched, and wiping the spots of blood from his face with his arm, would turn towards Carthage and watch the horizon.

Opposite him, among the olives, palms, myrtles, and plane trees, stretched two broad pools connected with another lake, of which the shores could not be seen. Behind one mountain others reared themselves aloft, and in the midst of the huge lake rose an island, perfectly black, in the form of a pyramid. To the left, at the extremity of the gulf, were sand-dunes, resembling great yellow waves arrested in the act of motion, while the sea, level as a floor paved with lapis-lazuli, rose imperceptibly to the heavens' rim. Here and there the verdure of the landscape gave place to long stretches of yellow; locust-beans gleamed like studs of coral; sprays of vine drooped from the tops of the sycamores; the murmur of water could be heard; crested larks were hopping about, and the backs of the tortoises, stealing from the reeds to breathe the evening air, were gilded by the last rays of the setting sun.



## Salamambo

Deep sighs broke from Matho's breast ; prone upon the ground, he dug his nails into the soil and wept ; he felt wretched, feeble, forlorn. Never would she be his to enjoy ; he could not even take possession of a town.

Alone in his tent, at night, he gazed upon the zaïmph. Of what use to him was this chattel of the Gods ? And doubts would arise in the Barbarian's mind. Then, on the contrary, it seemed to him that the vesture of the Goddess belonged to Salamambo ; that about it there hovered a portion of her soul more subtle than a breath ; and he fingered it, breathed its essence, buried his face in it, and kissed it with sobs. He would throw it over his shoulders in order to deceive himself into the belief that he was by her side.

Sometimes he would suddenly slip away ; by the light of the stars he would step over the sleeping soldiers, wrapped in their cloaks ; at the gates of the camp he would spring upon a horse, and two hours later find himself at Utica in the tent of Spendius.

At first he would talk of the siege ; but he had merely come to find relief from his pain in talking of Salamambo. Spendius counselled prudence.

“Dismiss these trifles from your mind ; they degrade it ! Of old you used to obey ; now you are in command of an army, and if Carthage should not be conquered, we shall at least obtain a concession of provinces. We shall become kings ! ”

But how was it that possession of the zaïmph did not give them victory ? According to Spendius, they must wait.

## Hanno

Matho imagined that the influence of the veil was confined to men of Canaanite race, and with all a Barbarian's subtlety, said to himself, "So the zaïmph will do nothing for me ; but since they have lost it, it cannot do anything for them."

Then a scruple troubled him. He was afraid that by worshipping Aptouknos, the god of the Libyans, he would give offence to Moloch ; and he timidly inquired of Spendius to which of the two it would be well to sacrifice a man.

"You must sacrifice, in either case," said Spendius, laughing.

Matho, who had no conception of such indifference, suspected the Greek of having a familiar spirit of whom he was unwilling to speak.

In these Barbarian armies every form of worship was to be found, as well as every race, and each respected the gods of the others, for they, too, inspired fear. Many mingled foreign practices with the religions in which they were born. It was nothing that one was not a star-worshipper ; such and such a constellation was hateful or helpful, therefore sacrifices were offered to it ; an unknown amulet, found by chance in circumstances of danger, became a divinity ; or it might be that a name, a mere name, was repeated without the slightest attempt to understand what it might mean. But many, from having sacked temples, seen many nations and many a massacre, came at last to believe in nothing but destiny and death ; and such fell asleep each night with the tranquillity of wild beasts. Spendius would have spat upon the images of Jupiter Olympus, but he was afraid of speaking

## Salamambo

aloud in the dark, and took care every day that his right foot should be shod first.

Opposite Utica he erected a long quadrangular terrace. But the higher it rose, the loftier also grew the rampart ; and what the one party knocked down was almost immediately restored by the other. Spendius was careful of his men ; he pondered schemes and tried to recollect the stratagems of which he had heard tell in the course of his travels. Why did not Narr' Havas return ? Considerable anxiety prevailed.

Hanno had concluded his preparations. One night, when there was no moon, he had his elephants and soldiers carried across the gulf of Carthage on rafts. They made the circuit of the mountain of the Hot-Springs in order to avoid Autharitus, and proceeded so slowly that instead of surprising the Barbarians one morning, in accordance with the Suffete's calculations, they did not arrive until the sun was high up on the third day.

On the eastern side of Utica lay a broad plain which stretched as far as the great lagoon of Carthage ; behind the town was the opening of a valley running at right angles between two mountains which came to an abrupt termination. The Barbarians were encamped farther away to the left, in such a manner as to command the harbour, and when the Carthaginian army appeared ~~from~~ between the hills they were asleep in their tents, for both sides, being too weary to fight, were devoting that day to rest.

The soldiers' servants, provided with slings, were

## Hanno

stationed in open order upon the flanks. The first line was constituted by the guards of the Legion, clad in their armour of golden scales and mounted on their great horses which had neither mane, nor hair, nor ears, and wore each a silver horn in the midst of his forehead to make him resemble a rhinoceros. Lads wearing small helmets and carrying an ashen lance poised in either hand marched between the squadrons, while the long pikes of the heavy infantry came on behind. These, who were merchants, had each loaded his body with the utmost possible accumulation of weapons; some might be seen carrying at once a lance, an axe, a club, and a couple of swords; others, like porcupines, bristled with darts, and their arms stuck straight out from cuirasses made of sheets of horn or plates of brass. Last of all appeared the scaffoldings of the tall war-engines, carroballistas, onagers, catapults, and scorpions, swaying upon chariots drawn by mules, and cars drawn by teams of oxen yoked four abreast, and as the army deployed in order of battle the officers ran beside it on the right and on the left in order to transmit commands, to keep the ranks closed, and to maintain the proper distances. Those of the Ancients who occupied positions of command had come wearing purple cloaks with fringes of such magnificence that they became entangled in the straps of their cothurni. Their faces, smeared with vermilion, shone beneath enormous helmets crowned with figures of gods, and their shields, with rims of ivory covered with gems, might have been taken for suns moving before walls of brass.

## Salamambo

So clumsily did the Carthaginians manœuvre that the soldiers in derision besought them to sit down. They shouted to them that they were about to empty their great bellies for them, to dust their gilded hides, and give them a draught of cold steel.

At the top of the pole planted before Spendius' tent there appeared a fragment of green cloth. This was the signal for the battle. The Carthaginians answered it by a great noise of trumpets, cymbals, dulcimers, and flutes of asses' bone. The Barbarians had already leapt down from their palisades, and the two armies found themselves facing one another, a javelin's throw apart.

A Balearic slinger stepped out a pace in front of the ranks, placed one of his clay balls in the leather of his sling, and whirled his arm; an ivory shield was shivered, and the two armies closed with one another.

The Greeks pricked the nostrils of the horses with their lance-points, and made them fall backwards upon their riders. The missiles chosen by the slaves told off to throw stones were too large, and fell quite near to the thrower. The Punic foot-soldier, in slashing with his long sword, left his right side unprotected. The Barbarians penetrated their lines, cut them down with the sword, and blinded by the blood which spurted into their faces, stumbled over the dead and dying. The mass of pikes, helmets, breastplates, swords, and entangled limbs, revolving upon its centre, expanded and contracted like an elastic body. The Carthaginian cohorts became more and more broken, their engines could not be extricated from the sand, and

## Hanno

finally the Suffete's litter (his great litter with the crystal pendants), which from the first had been seen tossing among the soldiers like a boat upon the waves, quite suddenly foundered. Doubtless he was dead. The Barbarians found themselves alone.

The dust about them was subsiding, and they were beginning to sing, when Hanno himself appeared upon the back of an elephant. His bare head was protected by a linen parasol, held by a negro behind him. The collar of blue plates smote against the flowers of his black tunic ; his enormous arms were compressed by hoops of diamonds, and open-mouthed he brandished an enormous spear, which spread out at the end like a lotus, and shone more brightly than a mirror. The next moment the earth shook, and the Barbarians saw all the elephants of Carthage sweeping on in a single line, clad in bronze, their tusks gilded, their ears painted blue ; while above their scarlet housing swayed towers of leather, in each of which three archers held a great bow drawn.

The soldiers had barely retained possession of their arms ; they fell into rank just where they were. Seized by a chill fit of terror, they remained irresolute.

Javelins, arrows, fiery darts, and masses of lead were already being hurled at them from the height of the towers, and some, in order to scale them, clung to the fringes of the housings. Their hands were cut off with cutlasses, and they fell backwards upon the spears outstretched around them. Their pikes broke, being too weak, and the elephants swept through the phalanxes like wild boars through

## Salamambo

tangled grass ; they tore up the stakes of the camp with their trunks, and crossed it from end to end, sweeping down the tents beneath their chests. The Barbarians had all fled, and were seeking shelter among the hills overlooking the valley by which the Carthaginians had made their approach.

Hanno, as victor, presented himself before the gates of Utica, and ordered a trumpet-blast to be sounded. The three Justices of the town appeared at the top of a tower in an embrasure of the battlements.

The inhabitants of Utica were unwilling to receive men so thoroughly armed within their town. Hanno flew into a passion, and at last they consented to admit him with a small escort, but the streets proved to be too narrow for the elephants, which had to be left outside. On the entrance of the Suffete the principal inhabitants of the town came to pay him their respects ; then he had himself taken to the vapour baths, and called for his cooks.

Three hours later he was still immersed in the oil of cinnamon with which the basin had been filled ; eating, meanwhile, from a stretched ox-hide, flamingoes' tongues and poppy seeds seasoned with honey. His Greek physician, who, dressed in a yellow robe, stood motionless beside him, had the bath warmed afresh from time to time, while two lads, stooping over the steps of the basin, rubbed his legs. But his care for the body was no obstacle to his love of public affairs, for he was dictating a letter to the Great Council, and as some prisoners had just been

## Hanno

taken, he was considering what he could devise for them in the way of a frightful punishment.

"Stop!" he said to the slave who stood writing in the hollow of his hand. "Let some of them be brought! I wish to see them."

Three Barbarians, a Samnite, a Spartan, and a Cappadocian were thrust forward from the farther end of the room, now filled with a whitish vapour lit with red gleams from the torches.

"Proceed!" said Hanno.

"'Light of the Baals, rejoice! Your Suffete has exterminated the ravenous dogs! Blessings on the Republic! Ordain a public thanksgiving!'" Here, catching sight of the captives, he burst into laughter. "Aha! my gallant fellows from Sicca! You do not shout quite so loudly to-day! It is I! Do you recognise me? Why, where are your swords? Terrible fellows, forsooth!" And he made as though he would hide himself for fear of them. "You asked for horses, women, lands; for appointments as magistrates, doubtless, and as priests! Why not? Very good; I will find you lands—which you will never quit more! You shall be married to gallows-trees, brand new! Your pay? It shall be poured molten into your mouths, in ingots of lead! Fine places will I find you—lofty ones, amid the clouds, that you may be near the eagles!"

The three Barbarians, with hair unkempt, covered with rags, gazed at him without understanding what he said. Wounded in the knees, they had been taken by lassoes, and the heavy chains attached to their hands trailed their ends upon the paving-stones. Their insensibility exasperated Hanno.



## Salamambo

"On your knees! On your knees, jackals, dust, vermin, dung! And they make no reply! That will do! Hold your tongues! Let them be flayed alive! No, at once!"

Wheezing like a hippopotamus, he rolled his eyes. His bulk caused the perfumed oil to overflow; it clung to his scaly skin, and gave it a pink tinge in the torchlight.

"'For four days,'" he continued, resuming his letter, "'we have suffered greatly from the sun. Some mules were lost in fording the Macar. In spite of their position, the extraordinary courage . . . ' Ah! Demonades! How I suffer! Have the bricks heated again, and let them be red-hot!"

There was heard a sound of furnaces and of raking. The incense in the wide brasiers smoked more vigorously, and the naked masseurs, perspiring like sponges, pressed to his joints an ointment compounded of corn, sulphur, black wine, bitches' milk, myrrh, galbanum, and styrax. He was consumed with ceaseless thirst, but the man clad in yellow did not gratify his desire.

"Drink!" said he, offering him a golden cup of steaming broth made from a viper. "Drink! That the marrow of your bones may be infused with the strength of serpents, the offspring of the sun! Take courage, O image of the Gods! You know, moreover, that one of Eschmoun's priests observes those baleful lights around the Dog-star whence your sickness is derived. They are growing paler, like the spots upon your skin. They shall not be your death."

"Ah, no!" repeated the Suffete. "They shall

## Hanno

not be my death, shall they?" And the breath which issued from his lips was more offensive than the exhalation of a corpse. He had no eyebrows, and instead of eyes live coals seemed to burn in his sockets; a growth of wrinkled skin hung down over his forehead; his ears, which stood out from his head, were beginning to grow larger, and the deep wrinkles which formed semicircles about his nostrils gave him a strange and terrifying aspect, the appearance of a wild beast. His unnatural voice resembled a roar.

"Maybe you are right, Demonades," he said. "In fact, many of the ulcers have closed. I feel robust. Just see how I eat!"

And less from gluttony than from ostentation, and in order to prove to himself that he was in good health, he set to work upon the minced cheese and marjoram, the boned fish, the pumpkins, and the oysters, the eggs, horse-radish, truffles, and brochettes of small birds. Watching the prisoners, he revelled in the thought of the punishment his fancy assigned them. But then he remembered Sicca, and the intensity of all his sufferings vented itself in abuse of these three men.

"Ah, traitors! Infamous, accursed wretches! And you insulted me—me! The Suffete! Their services, the price of their blood, they say! Ah, yes! Their blood! Their blood!" Then, speaking to himself, "Every one shall die! Not a man of them shall be sold! It would be better to take them to Carthage; the people would see me . . . but, of course, I have not brought chains enough. Write, 'Send me. . . .' How many of them are

## Salamambo

there? Send and inquire of Muthumbal! Away with you! We will show no mercy! And let all their hands be cut off and brought to me in baskets!"

But above Hanno's voice, and above the clatter of the dishes that were being set down about him, strange cries, at once hoarse and shrill, were making their way into the chamber. They grew louder still, and all at once the furious trumpeting of elephants burst forth, as though the battle were beginning anew. A great uproar broke out all round the town.

The Carthaginians had made no attempt to pursue the Barbarians, but had taken up their station at the foot of the walls, with their baggage, their servants, and their entire train of satraps; and were making merry beneath their fine, pearl-bordered tents, while the Mercenaries' camp in the plain was reduced to a heap of ruins. Spendius had regained his courage. Having despatched Zarxas to Matho, he scoured the woods and rallied his men, whose losses were insignificant. Furious at having been defeated without a battle, they were falling once more into rank, when a vat of mineral oil, abandoned doubtless by the Carthaginians, was discovered. Then Spendius had some pigs carried off from farms, and having smeared them with the bitumen, set them alight and drove them towards Utica.

The elephants, terrified by the flames, took to flight. The ground in front of them rose, the Barbarians hurled spears at them, and turning back, they ripped up the Carthaginians with strokes of their tusks, or stamped the breath out of them and

## Hanno

crushed them flat beneath their feet. The Barbarians came down from the hill behind them, the sacking of the Punic camp, which was destitute of entrenchments, began with the first charge, and the Carthaginians found themselves penned against the gates, which the inhabitants would not open for fear of the Mercenaries.

Day broke, and Matho's foot-soldiers were seen coming up from the west. At the same time some horsemen made their appearance; these were Narr' Havas and his Numidians. Leaping over bushes and the beds of streams, they hunted down the fugitives like greyhounds in pursuit of hares. The Suffete's dictation was cut short by this change in the fortunes of the day. He shouted for assistance to enable him to leave the bath.

The three captives were still before him. Then a negro—the one who carried his parasol during the battle—bent down to his ear.

"Well . . ." replied the Suffete slowly. "Oh, kill them!" he added roughly.

The Ethiopian drew a long poniard from his belt, and the three heads fell to the ground. One of them, rolling over and over among the remains of the repast, tumbled at last into the basin, where it floated some time with open mouth and fixed eyes. The morning light entered through the crevices in the wall; the three bodies lying prone streamed copiously like so many springs, and over the mosaic pavement, sprinkled with blue powder, there spread a sheet of blood. Dipping his hand in the warm slime, the Suffete rubbed it on his knees, for this was considered a remedy.

## Salammbo

At nightfall he escaped from the town with his escort and plunged into the defiles of the mountain in order to rejoin his army. He managed to discover the remnants of it.

Four days later he was at Gorza, on the heights commanding a ravine, when the troops of Spendius made their appearance below. Twenty good lances, by a front attack upon their column, could easily have stopped them, but the Carthaginians watched them file past as though they themselves were stupefied. Among the rearguard Hanno recognised the King of the Numidians; Narr' Havas bowed a salute, making a sign which Hanno did not understand.

Their return to Carthage was attended with all kinds of terrors. They marched by night only, by day concealing themselves among the olive woods. Deaths occurred at every halting-place, and many times they gave themselves up for lost. At last they reached Cape Hermæum, where vessels came to take them away.

Hanno was at once so weary and so desperate—the loss of his elephants being the most crushing blow of all—that, to have done with it, he demanded poison of Demonades; he felt, moreover, as though he were already stretched upon his cross.

Carthage had not the spirit to be angry with him. She had lost four hundred thousand nine hundred and seventy-two shekels of silver, fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-three shekels of gold, eighteen elephants, fourteen members of the Great Council, three hundred of the Rich, eight thousand citizens, corn for three moons, a considerable amount

## Hanno

of baggage, and all the engines of war! The defection of Narr' Havas was beyond doubt, and the siege of both towns was beginning anew. The army of Autharids now stretched from Tunis to Rhades. From the summit of the Acropolis tall columns of smoke could be seen rising into the sky, indicating that the mansions of the Rich were on fire.

One man alone could have saved the Republic. She repented of having failed to appreciate him, and sacrifices were voted, even by the peace party, for Hamilcar's return.

The sight of the zaïmph had thrown Salammbo into a state of utter distraction. She fancied that at night she heard the steps of the Goddess, and awoke terrified and screaming. Every day she sent food to the temples. Taanach wearied herself in carrying out her orders, and Schahabarim no longer left her side.

## VII

### HAMILCAR BARCA

THE Herald of the Moons, who kept watch by night on the summit of the temple of Eschmoun that he might trumpet forth the changes of the planet, perceived one morning, to the west, something not unlike a great bird skimming the surface of the sea with its wings. It was a vessel with three banks of oars and a carved horse upon its prow.

The Herald of the Moons placed his hand before his eyes ; then, thrusting forth his clarion, sounded over Carthage a mighty brazen blast. Every house poured out its inhabitants ; the announcement, received with incredulity, gave rise to disputes, and the mole became crowded with people. At length they recognised the trireme of Hamilcar.

Proudly, sternly she came on, with yards squared and sail swelling out from top to bottom of the mast as she cleft the foam around her ; her huge oars threshed the water in regular succession ; the end of her keel, fashioned like a ploughshare, showed itself from time to time, and beneath the spur which formed the termination of her prow, the ivory-headed horse, its fore-limbs outstretched, seemed to be careering over the ocean-plains.

## Hamilcar Barca

As she rounded the promontory the wind fell, the sail was lowered, and a man could be discerned standing bareheaded close to the pilot. It was he, Hamilcar the Suffete! His hips were girt with glittering plates of steel; the red cloak fastened to his shoulders revealed his arms; two pearls of great length were attached to his ears, and a dark bushy beard swept his bosom.

Meanwhile the galley, tossing among the rocks, was skirting the mole, followed by the crowd upon the flagstones.

"Hail!" they shouted. "Blessings on you, eye of Khamon! Ah, deliver us! It is the Rich who are to blame. They mean to put you to death. Look to yourself, Barca!"

He made no reply, as though the sound of the ocean and the clamour of battle had rendered him stone deaf. But at the foot of the steps which led down from the Acropolis Hamilcar raised his head, and folding his arms, fixed his gaze on the temple of Eschmoun. Higher still rose his glance, into the pure open sky; he shouted an order to his crew, and the trireme bounded forwards; it grazed the idol stationed at the corner of the mole to still the tempest, and crashing through them, drove back the other vessels, which, with prows like crocodiles' jaws, lay moored to piles in the commercial harbour, now full of garbage, splinters of wood, and fruit-peel. The people were hurrying after it, and some threw themselves into the water, but already the vessel was before the nail-studded door at the farther end. The door rose and the trireme vanished beneath the mighty archway.



## Salamambo

The Military port was entirely separate from the city; when ambassadors arrived they had to pass between two walls through a passage which ran to the left and opened in front of the temple of Khamon. This great stretch of water, round as a cup, was bordered with quays whereon sheds were built for sheltering the vessels. A pair of columns, with the horns of Ammon upon their capitals, stood before each, forming thereby an unbroken succession of arcades around the basin. On an island in the middle rose a house for the Suffete of the Sea.

So clear was the water that one might see the bottom with its pavement of white pebbles. Here the noise of the streets could not be heard, and Hamilcar recognised, as he passed them, the triremes he had once commanded.

There remained, perhaps, but a score of them, safely housed upon the land, leaning over on their sides or upright on their keels, with poops of great height and curving prows, covered with gilding and mystic symbols. The dragons had lost their wings, the Dii-Patæci their arms, the bulls their silver horns, and all of them, their paint half gone, inert, rotten, yet teeming with history and still odorous of their voyages, like crippled soldiers who meet their old commander seemed to say, "'Tis we! 'Tis we! And you—you, too, are 'vanquished!'"

None save the Suffete of the Sea might enter the admiral's house. So long as there was no proof of his death it was assumed that he was always alive. In this manner the Ancients avoided one master the more, and they had not failed to follow the custom in respect to Hamilcar.

## Hamilcar Barca

The Suffete made his way into the deserted chambers. At every step he discovered armour, furniture, and other objects which surprised him in spite of their familiarity, while in a brazier beneath the vestibule there still remained the very ashes of the perfumes which had been kindled at his departure in order to propitiate Melkarth. Not thus did he then hope to return! All that he had done, all that he had seen, unfolded itself within his memory—assaults, conflagrations, legions, and tempests; Drepanum, Syracuse, Lilybæum, Mount Etna, the plain of Eryx, five years of fighting—down to the fatal day when Carthage had laid down her arms and Sicily had been lost. Once again he beheld groves of citron, and shepherds with their goats upon the grey mountains, and his heart leapt at the dream of another Carthage founded on those shores. His head, still dizzy from the pitching of the vessel, was humming with his memories and schemes; overcome by a spasm of agony, he became suddenly weak, and felt a longing to draw nearer to the Gods.

Thereupon he ascended to the highest story of his house, and drawing from a shell suspended to his arm a spatula studded with nails, he opened a small oval chamber.

It was softly lighted by thin black discs, let into the wall and transparent as glass. They were of equal size, and between their rows holes like those designed for urns in sepulchral chambers had been hollowed out. Each of these contained a round stone, of a dull hue and apparently very heavy. None but those of superior intelligence paid respect

## Salamambo

to these abaddirs, which had fallen from the moon. By their fall they signified stars, sky, and fire; by their colour the darkness of night, and by their density the cohesion of terrestrial things. A stifling atmosphere pervaded the mystic spot. The round stones in the niches were whitened somewhat with sea sand, doubtless driven through the doorway by the wind. One after another Hamilcar reckoned them up with his finger-tip, then, covering his face with a saffron-coloured veil and falling upon his knees, he cast himself headlong upon the ground with arms outstretched.

From without the daylight smote upon the leaves of dark lattice-work; the outlines of tree and hill, billowy cloud and vague animal forms took shape within their transparent substance, and within the chamber shone a light, awful yet peaceful, such as may illuminate the regions beyond the sun, the desolate scenes of future creation.

He strove to banish all forms from his thought, together with all the symbols and the appellations of the Gods, that he might the better apprehend the immutable spirit which appearances concealed. Something of the planetary vitalities entered into his being, while for death and for all that fate might have in store he felt the disdain which fuller and more intimate knowledge confers. He arose full of fearless serenity, proof alike against pity and against fear. Feeling a stifling sensation within his breast, he went out upon the summit of the tower which looked forth over Carthage.

Beneath him the city fell away in a long, hollow curve, with its cupolas, its temples, its roofs of gold,

## Hamilcar Barca

its houses, its flashing spheres of glass and here and there its groups of palms, while the ramparts formed, as it were, the huge rim of this horn of plenty which poured forth its treasures before him. Below he could discern the ports, the squares, the interior of the courts and the plan of the streets, with men so small that they seemed to be level with the flagstones. Ah, if only Hanno had not arrived too late on the morning of the *Ægates Insulae*! His eyes pierced the horizon to its depths, and he thrust out his trembling arms in the direction of Rome.

The multitude had taken possession of the steps of the Acropolis. In the square of Khamon men were crowding on one another in order to see the Suffete come forth; by degrees the terraces became thronged with people. Recognised by some of them, he was greeted with salutations, but he retired again in order to raise the popular impatience to a higher pitch.

In the hall below Hamilcar found the most important members of his own party: Istatten, Subeldia, Hictamon, Yeoubas, and others. They gave him an account of all that had happened since the conclusion of peace: of the avarice of the Ancients, the departure of the soldiers, their return, their demands, the capture of Gisco, the rape of the *zaimph*, the relief and subsequent abandonment of Utica; but none dared tell him of the events which concerned himself. Finally they parted, to meet again during the night at the gathering of the Ancients in the temple of Moloch.

They had scarcely left when a disturbance arose without, at the door of the house. Someone was

## Salamambo

attempting to enter in defiance of the servants, and as the noise increased Hamilcar gave orders that the stranger should be introduced.

"It was an old negress that made her appearance, bent, wrinkled, and trembling, with an air of stupidity about her and wrapped down to the feet in broad, blue veils. She came straight towards the Suffete, and for a time they looked one another in the face; then Hamilcar gave a sudden start, and at a motion of his hand the slaves withdrew. Thereupon, with a sign that she should walk with caution, he led her by the arm to a distant chamber.

The negress threw herself on the ground to kiss his feet, but he raised her roughly.

"Where have you left him, Iddibal?"

"Yonder, my lord." Casting off her veils, she rubbed her face with her sleeve, and the dusky complexion, the palsy of age, the stooping figure, all disappeared. It was a robust old man, his skin apparently tanned by wind, sand, and sea. A tuft of white hair stood upright on his cranium, like the crest of a bird; and with a glance of mockery he pointed to his disguise, now lying on the ground.

"You have done right, Iddibal! Quite right!" Then, as though searching him through with his keen glance, "And none, as yet, suspects . . .?"

The old man swore by the Kabiri that the secret was safe. They kept close to their cabin, which was distant three days' journey from Hadrumetum, and was situated on a shore peopled by tortoises, with palms upon its sand hills. "And in accordance with your instructions, my lord, I am teaching him to cast the javelin and to drive a team."

## Hamilcar Barca

"He is strong, eh?"

"Strong, my lord, and bold! He fears neither serpent, nor thunder, nor spectre. Barefoot, like a herdsman, he scours the brink of the precipice."

"Go on! Go on!"

"He devises snares for wild beasts. But a moon ago—would you believe it?—he captured an eagle, and as he carried it off the bird's blood and the lad's were showered abroad in great drops like roses blown to pieces by the wind. The creature, in its fury, enveloped him with the beating of its wings; he crushed it against his breast, and his laughter, haughty and ringing as the clash of swords, grew louder as its struggles ceased."

Dazzled by these omens of greatness, Hamilcar bowed his head.

"But of late he has been a prey to restlessness. He watches the sails which cross the sea in the distance; he is melancholy, refuses bread, asks questions about the Gods, and wants to become acquainted with Carthage."

"No, no! Not yet!" cried the Suffete.

The old slave seemed aware of the danger which alarmed Hamilcar, and resumed—

"How am I to restrain him? I have already been obliged to make him promises, and I have come to Carthage simply in order to buy him a dagger with a silver handle set with pearls." Then he told how he had perceived the Suffete on the terrace, and in order to obtain access to him had represented himself to the keepers of the port as one of the women of Salamambo.

Long Hamilcar remained lost, apparently, in thought. At last he spoke.

## Salamambo

"To-morrow, at sunset, you will present yourself at Megara, behind the purple factory, and thrice imitate a jackal's cry. If you do not see me, you are to return to Carthage on the first day of every moon. Forget nothing! Cherish him! You may now speak to him of Hamilcar."

The slave resumed his costume, and together they left the house and the harbour.

Hamilcar proceeded alone, on foot and without an escort, for special meetings of the Ancients were always secret, and those who attended them concealed their approach.

Passing at first along the eastern façade of the Acropolis, he proceeded by way of the Grass-market, the passages of Kinisdo, and the perfumers' quarter. The sparse lights were being extinguished, the broader streets subsided into silence, and shadows glided through the darkness. They followed Hamilcar, and were succeeded by others, all, like him, bending their steps in the direction of the Mappalia.

The temple of Moloch was built in a gloomy and forbidding spot at the foot of a precipitous ravine. Nothing could be seen of it from below save lofty walls rising aloft to an indefinite height, like the side of a monstrous tomb. The night was dark, and a greyish fog seemed to hang above the sea, which beat against the cliff with a hoarse, sobbing roar. Gradually the shadows vanished as though they had passed through the walls.

But once across the threshold, one found oneself within a huge quadrangle bordered by arcades. In the centre rose a mass of architecture with eight equal sides, surmounted by cupolas disposed about

## Hamilcar Barca

a second story, which supported a kind of rotunda ; from this rose a cone curving inwards upon itself, and terminated at the summit by a ball.

Men were holding poles surmounted by cylinders of filigree in which fire was burning, and the lights flickered in the gusts of the wind, reddening the golden combs which held the bearers' braided hair in place on the backs of their necks. They were hurrying to and fro, calling upon one another to receive the Ancients.

Crouching upon the flagstones here and there, like sphinxes, lay huge lions, living symbols of the devouring Sun, dozing with half-shut eyelids. But awakened by the steps and voices they slowly rose, and approaching the Ancients, whom they distinguished by their dress, rubbed themselves against their thighs, arching their backs and yawning loudly, while the vapour of their breath was seen rising upwards against the light of the torches. The commotion increased, doors were closed, all the priests hurried away, and the ancients disappeared among the columns which formed a deep vestibule around the temple.

These were so arranged that their circular ranks, each included within the last, represented successively the Saturnian period as containing the years, the years as containing the months, and the months the days, the pillars of the last row being in contact with one another against the wall of the sanctuary.

Here the Ancients laid aside their staves of nar-whal's horn, for a law which was always observed prescribed the penalty of death for those who at-



## Salamambo

tended the sitting bearing any weapon whatsoever. To show that in mourning their kinsfolk they did not consider their clothes, many had rents in the skirts of their garments, arrested by a piece of purple lace; an evidence of affliction which prevented the damage from increasing. Others had their beards wrapped in a little bag of violet-coloured leather, attached to their ears by cords. All, as they met, embraced one another, heart to heart. Crowding around Hamilcar, to congratulate him, they might have been taken for brethren meeting their own brother once more.

In figure these men were mostly short and thick-set, with hooked noses like those of Assyrian idols. Some, however, by their more prominent cheek-bones, loftier stature and narrower feet betrayed African descent and nomadic ancestry. Those who spent their whole lives in the seclusion of their counting-houses were of pale complexion; about others the austerity of a desert life seemed to linger, and their hands, tanned by unknown suns, flashed with strange jewels upon every finger. Those of sea-faring habits were known by their walk, while those engaged in agriculture retained a scent of the wine-press, dried herbs, and the sweat of mules. Here were ex-pirates who had their cultivated farms, money-grubbers, who placed their money in maritime ventures, owners of landed property who kept slaves trained to follow handicrafts. All were adepts in religious discipline, masters of stratagem, relentless, rich. They seemed worn by long anxiety; there was mistrust in the glance of their flaming eyes; familiarity with travel and with falsehood, with the

## Hamilcar Barca

practice of trade and with command, gave to their whole persons an appearance of violence and guile, a suggestion of brutality at once discreet and liable to sudden outbreak. They were sobered, moreover, by the influence of the God.

They traversed, first of all, an apartment shaped like an egg, with a vaulted roof. Seven doors, corresponding to the seven planets, formed seven squares of different colours upon the wall. Passing through a long chamber, they entered another and similar hall.

A candelabrum, carved all over with flowers, was burning at the farther end, each of its eight golden branches carrying a flaxen wick in a chalice of diamonds. It stood upon the last of the broad steps leading to a great altar which terminated at the angles in horns of brass. Two lateral staircases led to the top of the altar, which was flat; the stones of which it was constructed could not be seen; it was like a mountainous heap of cinders whereon something indistinguishable was slowly smoking. And beyond, loftier than the candelabrum, far loftier than the altar, rose the figure of Moloch, of iron throughout, his man's breast pierced by gaping apertures. His open wings were extended upon the wall, his elongated hands reached down to the ground; three black stones, each surrounded by a circle of yellow, were set in his forehead to represent three eyes, while his bull's head was raised aloft in a frightful effort, as though in order to bellow.

Ebony stools were ranged around the apartment, behind each of which was a standard of bronze,

## Salamambo

resting on three claws and supporting a torch. Every light was reflected in the diamond-shaped sections of mother-of-pearl with which the hall was paved. So lofty was it that the red hue of the walls faded into black towards the roof, while the eyes of the idol could be discerned far aloft, like stars half lost in the darkness.

The Ancients seated themselves on the ebony stools, after folding the skirts of their robes about their heads. They remained motionless, their hands crossed in their ample sleeves, and the mother-of-pearl pavement seemed like a luminous river which streamed from the altar to the door beneath their bare feet.

In the midst sat the four pontiffs, back to back, on four ivory seats arranged in the form of a cross, the high-priest of Eschmoun robed in hyacinth, the high-priest of Tanit in white linen, the high-priest of Khamon in tawny wool, and the high-priest of Moloch in purple.

Hamilcar approached the candelabrum. Walking round it, he inspected the burning wicks, and then sprinkled them with a perfumed powder. Violet flames appeared at the ends of the branches.

Then a shrill voice arose ; another responded to it, and the hundred Ancients, the four pontiffs, and Hamilcar, who remained standing, simultaneously intoned a hymn. Repeating always the same syllables, and gradually increasing in volume, their voices rose, burst forth at full strength, grew terrible, then suddenly died away.

There was a pause of some duration. At last Hamilcar drew from his bosom a small three-headed

## Hamilcar Barca

statuette, blue as sapphire, which he placed before him. It was the image of Truth, the very spirit of his discourse. Then he replaced it in his breast, and all, as though seized with sudden anger, shouted—

“They are your good friends, the Barbarians! Traitor! Scoundrel! So you have come back to witness our destruction? Let him speak!” “No, no!”

They requited themselves for the constraint imposed but a moment ago by state ceremonial; and though they had longed for Hamilcar's return, they were now incensed against him for not having forestalled their calamities, or rather because he had not endured them as they had.

When the tumult had subsided the pontiff of Moloch rose to his feet.

“We ask you why you did not return to Carthage.”

“What is that to you?” replied the Suffete, with contempt.

Their shouts redoubled.

“What is it that you lay to my charge? Perhaps I have mismanaged the war? You have seen the dispositions I have made in the actions I have fought, while you yourselves, forsooth, so considerate of your own comfort, leave Barbarians to. . . .”

“Enough! Enough!”

“Oh! Quite true!” he resumed, speaking in a low voice, the better to secure their attention. “I am wrong, lights of the Baals; there are *some* men of courage among you! Gisco, stand forth!” And

## Salamambo

passing along the step in front of the altar, his eyelids half closed, as though in search of someone, he repeated, "Stand forth, Gisco! You can accuse me; they will defend you! But where is he?" Then, as though recollecting himself, "Ah! In his house, of course, happy, surrounded by his sons, giving orders to his slaves, and counting up the collars of honour conferred upon him by his country and now hanging on his walls!"

Fuming, they writhed as though their shoulders felt the lash.

"You do not even know whether he is alive or dead!" And heedless of their outcries, he declared that in forsaking the Suffete they had forsaken the Republic. So, too, the Roman peace, however advantageous it might appear to them, was more fatal than twenty battles. Some applauded; these were the less wealthy members of the Council, men suspected of being always in favour either of democracy or of despotism. Their opponents, the heads of the Syssitia and the administrative officials, had the advantage over them by reason of their numbers; those of most consequence being ranged close to Hanno, who occupied a seat at the farther end of the hall, before the lofty door now closed by a hyacinth-coloured hanging.

He had concealed the ulcers on his face with paint. But on his shoulders were two glittering patches, where the gold-dust had fallen from his hair, which had a whitish tinge and the soft, curly texture of wool. His hands were wrapped in linen steeped in an oily perfume which dripped upon the flagstones, and his disease had evidently made con-

## Hamilcar Barca

siderable progress, for his eyes were hidden beneath the folds of their lids. He could only see by throwing back his head. His partisans besought him to speak, and at last, in a horrible, raucous voice—

“Less arrogance, Barca!” he said. “We have all been defeated! Each bears the burden of his own misfortune. Accept yours with resignation!”

“Tell us rather,” said Hamilcar, with a smile, “how you came to steer your galleys among the Roman fleet.”

“I was driven before the wind,” replied Hanno.

“You are like a rhinoceros trampling about in his own dung: you make a parade of your folly! Hold your tongue!” And they began to exchange recriminations concerning the battle of the Ægates Insulæ.

Hanno accused him of not having come to meet him.

“But that would have meant leaving Eryx undefended. You ought to have stood out to sea; who was there to prevent you? Ah, I was forgetting! All elephants are afraid of the ocean.”

Hamilcar’s adherents so appreciated the jest that they broke into loud laughter, which made the roof ring with a sound like the beating of dulcimers.

Hanno protested against the indignity of such an outrage, his malady having been incurred through a chill received at the siege of Hecatompylos, and the tears coursed down his cheeks like winter rain upon a ruined wall.

“Had you shown the same devotion to me,” resumed Hamilcar, “as you have manifested towards

## Salamambo

him, there would be great rejoicing in Carthage to-day! How often have I appealed to you! And you always refused me money!"

"We required it ourselves," said the heads of the Syssitia.

"And when I was reduced to desperate straits—we have drunk the urine of mules and eaten the straps of our sandals—when I could have wished that each blade of grass was a soldier, and that I could raise fresh battalions from the rotting corpses of our dead, you summon home all the vessels I have left!"

"We could not risk the loss of everything," replied Baat-Baal, an owner of mines in Darytian Gætulia.

"Yet what were you doing here, at Carthage, within your houses and behind your walls? There are Gauls on the banks of the Eridanus who ought to have been incited to attack Rome, in Cyrene there are Canaanites who would have come, and while the Romans send ambassadors to Ptolemy . . ."

"He would have us admire the Romans!"

"How much," shouted someone, "did they pay you to defend them?"

"Ask the plains of Brutium, the ruins of Locri, of Metapontum, of Heraclea! I have burned their trees, sacked all their temples, and even to the death of the grandchildren of their grandchildren have I . . ."

"Why, you declaim like a rhetorician!" said Kapouras, a merchant of high reputation. "What would you have?"

"I say that we must either be more cunning or

## Hamilcar Barca

make ourselves more dreaded! If the whole of Africa casts off your yoke it will be because you are weak masters, and do not know how to bind it to her shoulders! Agathocles, Regulus, Cæpio—all who have courage and enterprise—need but to land on her shores, and Carthage is theirs. When once the Libyans in the east come to an understanding with the Numidians on the west, while the nomads come from the south, and the Romans from the north. . . .”

A cry of horror arose.

“ . . . Ah! Then will you beat your breasts, roll in the dust, and rend your garments. And all will be of no avail! Your lot will be to grind corn in the Suburra and to gather grapes on the hills of Latium.”

They smote their right thighs in token of their horror and indignation, and the sleeves of their robes tossed like the great wings of frightened birds. Standing aloft on the topmost step of the altar, trembling yet terrible, Hamilcar, raising his hands aloft, went on as though carried away by an inspiration, and the shafts of light from the candela-brum burning behind him passed like golden darts between his fingers.

“You will lose your ships, your mansions, your chariots, your hanging couches, and the slaves who rub your feet! In your palaces the jackal shall couch, and by the plough shall your graves be upturned. Nought shall remain save the eagle's scream and ruin heaped upon ruin. Carthage, thou shalt be overthrown!”

The four pontiffs extended their hands to avert



## Salammbo

the anathema. All had risen to their feet. But the Suffete of the Sea, being a sacerdotal magistrate under the protection of the Sun, was inviolable so long as he remained uncondemned by the assembly of the Rich. The altar was an object of superstitious dread. They shrank back.

Hamilcar had ceased to speak. With fixed eye, and face pale as the pearls of his tiara, he breathed heavily, almost frightened at himself and absorbed in sinister visions. From the height at which he stood the torches on their standards of bronze seemed to him like a huge coronal of flames laid flat upon the pavement; the black fumes which issued from them mounted into the darkness of the roof; and for some minutes so profound was the silence that the far-off sound of the sea could be heard.

Then the Ancients began to question one another. The Barbarians were threatening both their interests and their existence. But without the aid of the Suffete it was impossible to subdue them, and this consideration, notwithstanding their pride, made them oblivious of every other. They drew his friends aside, and there were reconciliations dictated by self-interest, tacit understandings, and mutual promises. Hamilcar refused to take a part in any administration. All adjured and entreated him, and at the recurrence of the word treason he fell into a passion. The one and only traitor was the Great Council, for seeing that the soldiers' term of service expired with the war, its conclusion set them at liberty; he even extolled their bravery and magnified the advantages that might be derived from enlisting their interest

## Hamilcar Barca

on behalf of the Republic by means of grants and privileges.

"Really, Barca," said Magdassan, a retired provincial governor, rolling his yellow eyes, "all your travelling has turned you into a Greek, or a Latin, or something! Why speak of rewarding these men? Perish a thousand Barbarians rather than one of us!"

The Ancients nodded their approval, murmuring, "Yes, what need of all this fuss? They are always to be had."

"And are always easily got rid of, are they not? They can be left to their own devices, as yours were in Sardinia. The enemy can be apprised of the route they will follow, as in the case of those Gauls in Sicily, or they may be unshipped in the open sea. I saw the rock all white with their bones as I passed!"

"How distressing!" observed Kapouras shamelessly.

"Have they not a hundred times gone over to the enemy?" cried the rest.

"Then why," exclaimed Hamilcar, "did you bring them back to Carthage? And when once they are inside your town, poor and numerous amid all your riches, you never dream of weakening them by creating a division among them! Afterwards you dismiss them with their wives and children, every one, without retaining a single hostage! Were you counting on their slaughtering one another in order to save you, the trouble of keeping your oaths? You hate them, because they are strong! And me, their master, you hate still more! Oh! I felt it

## Salamambo

just now, when you were kissing my hands, and every one restraining yourselves lest you should bite them ! ”

\* Had the lions sleeping in the court come howling in, the clamour could not have been more frightful. But the pontiff of Eschmoun arose, and stood erect, with his knees close together, his elbows pressed to his body, and his hands half open.

“ Barca,” he said, “ Carthage requires that you should take supreme command of the Punic forces against the Mercenaries.”

“ I refuse,” Hamilcar replied.

“ We will give you full authority,” cried the heads of the Syssitia.

“ No ! ”

“ Free from all control, all division of authority ; with all the money you ask for, all the captives, all the booty, and fifty zerets of land for the dead body of every one of our enemies ! ”

“ No, no ! With you it is impossible to conquer.”

“ He is afraid of them ! ”

“ Because you are cowardly, niggardly, thankless, mean-spirited, and stupid.”

“ He is considering their interests ! ”

“ To put himself at their head,” said someone.

\* “ And return against us,” said another ; and from the bottom of the hall Hanno shouted—

“ He wants to be king ! ”

At that they leapt to their feet, overturning seats and torches, rushing in a mob towards the altar and brandishing daggers. But Hamilcar, feeling beneath his sleeves, drew forth two broad hangers, and standing motionless beneath the golden candela-

## Hamilcar Barca

brum, slightly stooping, with left foot advanced, eyes aflame and clenched teeth, he bid them defiance.

So they had taken the precaution to bring weapons. It was a crime, and they eyed one another in alarm. But since all were alike guilty, each quickly recovered his assurance, and turning their backs on the Suffete, they came slowly down again, furious with humiliation. For the second time they had recoiled before him. During a brief interval they lingered, standing about. Several, whose fingers were injured, carried them to their mouths or wrapped them tenderly in the skirts of their robes. They were about to depart when Hamilcar caught the words—

“Oh, it is done out of consideration for his daughter, in order to spare her feelings!”

Then a louder voice arose—

“No doubt, seeing that she chooses her lovers from among the Mercenaries!”

At first he reeled; then his eyes hurriedly sought Schahabarim. But the priest of Tanit had been the only one to keep his seat, and from a distance Hamilcar could perceive nothing but his tall head-dress. Everyone laughed sneeringly in his face. The more he suffered the greater was their delight, and amidst the jeering those at the back cried out—

“He was seen coming out of her chamber!”

“One morning in the month of Tammouz!”

“The one who stole the zaïmph!”

• “A fine-looking man!”

“Taller than yourself!”

Tearing off his tiara, the emblem of his dignity—

## Salamambo

a tiara with eight mystic tiers and an emerald shell in the midst—with both hands, and with all his might, he dashed it upon the ground; its golden circlets broke asunder and bounded away, and the pearls tinkled on the paved floor. Then, amid the whiteness of his forehead, they perceived a long scar, which wavered between his eyebrows like a serpent, while he quivered in every limb. Mounting one of the side staircases which led to the top of the altar, he stepped upon it! He was about to dedicate himself to the God, to offer himself up as a sacrifice. The lights of the candelabrum, which did not reach to his sandals, flickered with the motion of his robe, and the fine powder disturbed by his steps rose about him, like a cloud, to the waist. Pausing between the legs of the brazen colossus, he took up a couple of handfuls of the dust, the mere sight of which caused every Carthaginian to quake with terror. Then he spoke.

“By the hundred lights of your Intelligences! by the eight fires of the Kabiri! by stars, meteors, and volcanoes! by all that burns! by the thirst of the Desert and the saltness of the Ocean! by the cavern of Hadrumetum and the realm of Souls! by destruction! by the ashes of your sons and the ashes of the brethren of your ancestors, with which I now mingle my own—you, the hundred members of the Council of Carthage, have lied in accusing my daughter! And I, Hamilcar Barca, Guffete of the Sea, Head of the Rich, and Ruler of the people—I swear, before bull-headed Moloch. . . .” They expected something terrible, but in a louder, calmer

## Hamilcar Barca

voice he continued, "that I will not even mention it to her."

In came the sacred attendants, wearing combs of gold, some with sponges of purple, others with branches of palm. They raised the hyacinth-coloured curtain which hung before the door, and within the opening of the angle and beyond the other apartments could be seen the great rosy sky which seemed a continuation of the roof, and rested at the horizon on a sea of unbroken blue. The sun was rising from beneath the waves. Suddenly it smote upon the breast of the great colossus, divided into seven compartments closed by gratings. His red-toothed maw stood open in a horrible yawn; his huge nostrils expanded, the light of day lent him animation and gave him a frightful look of impatience, as though he would fain rush forth to unite himself with the orb, the God, and traverse with him the boundless regions of space.

Meanwhile the torches which littered the ground were burning still, streaking the floor of mother-of-pearl with stains like splashes of blood. Tottering from exhaustion, the Ancients filled their lungs with deep breaths of fresh air; the perspiration streamed down their livid faces, and after all their shouting they could no longer make themselves heard. But their wrath against the Suffete had by no means subsided; they hurled menaces at him by way of farewell, and Hamilcar responded in kind.

"To-morrow night, Barca, in the temple of Eschmoun!"

"I shall be there!"

"We will have you condemned by the Rich!"

## Salammbo

"And I you by the people!"

"Beware lest you end upon the cross!"

"And you lest you be torn to pieces in the streets!"

On reaching the threshold of the court they at once resumed a calm demeanour.

Their runners and their coachmen were waiting for them at the door. Most of them took their departure upon white mules. The Suffete sprang into his chariot and grasped the reins; the two animals, arching their necks, made the entire ascent of the *Via Mappaliensis* at a gallop, while the pebbles bounded aside beneath the rhythmic beat of their hoofs, and so swiftly sped the chariot that the silver vulture at the end of the pole seemed to fly.

The road crossed an open field planted with slabs of stone, pointed at the top like pyramids, and engraved in the centre with an open hand which the underlying dead seemed to have stretched forth towards heaven in appeal. Then came scattered huts of mud, boughs or woven rushes, all of conical shape. Separated without any semblance of regularity by low walls of pebbles, channels of running water, ropes of esparto grass and hedges of Indian fig, these dwellings were crowded more and more closely together as the ascending road approached the gardens of the Suffete. But Hamilcar's eyes were directed towards a great tower, the three stories of which constituted three huge cylinders, the first built of stone, the second of brick, and the third entirely of cedar wood, crowned by a cupola

## Hamilcar Barca

of copper on twenty-four pillars of juniper, wherefrom hung slender chains of brass, like garlands intertwined. The buildings which extended to the right, the storehouses, and business offices, were overlooked by this lofty structure, while beyond the cypresses, which stood in lines like two walls of bronze, rose the women's palace.

Entering through the narrow gateway the clattering chariot halted beneath a spacious shed, where tethered horses were eating heaps of cut grass.

All the servants came hurrying up, quite a multitude in number, those who worked upon the country estates having been brought to Carthage, from fear of the soldiery. The agricultural labourers, clothed in skins, dragged chains riveted upon their ankles; the arms of those employed in the purple factories were red as those of executioners; the sailors wore green caps; the fishermen necklaces of coral; the hunters had nets upon their shoulders; while the inhabitants of Megara wore white or black tunics, with leather drawers, and caps of straw, felt, or linen, according to the conditions of their service or the varying industries in which they were engaged.

Behind them came a throng of tatterdemalions; creatures who lived without any occupation, quite away from the dwelling-rooms, sleeping at night in the gardens, and devouring the broken victuals from the kitchens—a human mould which vegetated in the shadow of the palace. Hamilcar tolerated them, still more, through foresight than through contempt. Each had placed a flower in his ear, in token of his delight, though many among them had never seen him.



## Salamambo

But men attired about the head like sphinxes and armed with stout staves ran in among the crowd and struck out right and left. This they did to drive back the slaves who were eager to see their master, that he might not be jostled by their numbers or annoyed by their odour.

Thereupon they all fell prone upon their faces, crying, "Eye of Baal, may thy house flourish!" And between them, as they lay thus upon the ground in the cypress avenue, Abdalonim, the stewards' overseer, advanced towards Hamilcar, wearing a white mitre, and carrying a censer in his hand.

Then Salamambo descended the staircase of the galleys. Behind her came all her women, and at every step she took they too descended. The line formed by the fillets of golden plates which bound the heads of the Roman women was dotted with great spots of black by the heads of the negresses. Others wore silver arrows in their hair, or emerald butterflies, or long needles arranged like sun-rays. Rings, brooches, necklaces, fringes, and bracelets glittered amid the confusion of garments, white, yellow, and blue; the rustling of delicate draperies grew louder; the pattering of sandals was audible, together with the dull sound of bare feet upon the wood-work; and here and there a tall eunuch, head and shoulders above the women, was smiling with upturned face. When the acclamations of the men had subsided they hid their faces in their sleeves, and uttered in unison a weird cry like the howling of a she-wolf, so fierce and strident that it seemed as though the great ebony staircase, crowded with

## Hamilcar , Barca

women, vibrated therewith from top to bottom like a lyre.

The wind raised their veils, and the slender stalks of the papyrus waved gently in the breeze. It was the month of Schebaz, the midst of winter. Pomegranates in bloom reared their swelling masses against the azure of the sky, the sea was visible between their branches, and in the distance an island, half hidden by mist.

On catching sight of Salammbo, Hamilcar paused. She had come to him unexpectedly, after the death of several male children. The birth of a girl, moreover, was regarded as a calamity in the religions of the Sun. At a later period the Gods had sent him a son; but he retained some memory of the hope that had been blighted, still felt the shock, as it were, of the curse he had pronounced against her. Salammbo, meanwhile, continued to advance.

Pearls of various colours fell in long loops from her ears to her shoulders and even to her elbows. Her hair was waved, in imitation of a cloud. About her neck she wore small quadrangular plates, whereon was depicted a woman between two lions rampant, and her attire was a complete reproduction of the costume of the Goddess. Her hyacinth-coloured robe, with large sleeves, fitted her closely about the waist, spreading more widely below. Her teeth appeared the whiter for the vermilion on her lips, her eyes the longer for the antimony on their lids. Her sandals, made from the plumage of a bird, had very high heels and, doubtless by reason of the cold, she was unusually pale.

## Salamambo

At last she reached Hamilcar's side, and without looking at him, without raising her head—

"Hail, Eye of Baalim!" she said. "Eternal glory, triumph, repose, comfort, and wealth be yours! Long has my heart been sad and the household pining. But the return of the master is like the restoration of Tammouz, and beneath your glance, O my father, life shall blossom afresh on every hand!"

And taking from the hands of Taanach a small oblong vessel containing a steaming mixture of flour, butter, cardamom, and wine, "Drink freely," said she, "of the cup of welcome your servant has prepared."

"May blessings," he said, "be yours!" and grasped mechanically the golden vessel she held forth.

Meanwhile he eyed her with such stern attention that Salamambo became disconcerted.

"They have told you, my lord . . ." she stammered.

"Yes, I know," said Hamilcar in a low voice.

Was it a confession? Or was she alluding to the Barbarians? And he added a few vague words on the political difficulties which he hoped by his own unaided effort to remove.

"O father!" exclaimed Salamambo, "you will never blot out the irreparable!"

He drew back, and Salamambo was amazed at his astonishment, for she was thinking not of Carthage but of the sacrilege in which she found herself an accomplice. She scarcely knew him, this man before whom legions trembled; he was terrible to her as a god; he had guessed, he knew all, and something

## Hamilcar Barca

dreadful was about to fall from his lips. "Pardon!" she said.

Slowly Hamilcar bent his head.

Though anxious to accuse herself, she nevertheless dared not open her lips, yet she was choking with the desire to pour forth her trouble and be consoled. Hamilcar was struggling against the longing to break his oath. Out of pride, or else because he feared to cast uncertainty aside, he kept it, and all his energies were devoted to trying to read her face, that he might detect what was hidden in the depths of her heart.

Unable to sustain the burden of his gaze, Salamambo, breathing heavily, let her head sink gradually between her shoulders. Sure, at last, that she had yielded to the embraces of a Barbarian, he trembled and raised his clenched hands. With a shriek she fell back among her women, who crowded about her. Hamilcar turned upon his heel, followed by all the stewards.

The door of the warehouses was thrown open, and he entered a huge, circular hall, which formed the point of convergence for long corridors leading to other chambers, like the nave of a wheel for its spokes. In the centre rose a circular plate of stone, railed round in order to confine the cushions which were littered upon its carpets.

At first the Suffete walked with great hasty strides, breathing loudly, stamping with his heel, and passing his hand across his forehead like a man tormented by flies. But he shook his head, and at the sight of his accumulated wealth grew calm; attracted by the vista of the corridors, his thoughts roamed

## Salamambo

among the other chambers full of treasures still more rare. Sheets of bronze, ingots of silver, and bars of iron were interspersed with pigs of tin brought from the Cassiterides by way of the Sea of Darkness; sacks made of palm-tree bark were overflowing with gums from the country of the Blacks, and skins, crammed with-gold' dust, were losing it imperceptibly at their ancient seams. Delicate fibres, the produce of marine plants, were hanging amid flax from Egypt, Greece, Taprobane, and Judæa; madrepores bristled like great shrubs at the base of the walls; and the air was pervaded by an indefinable odour, given off by perfumes, leather and spices, and by the ostrich plumes which hung in great bunches at the very top of the roof. At the entrance to each passage, elephants' teeth, set on end and meeting at the points, formed an arch above the door.

At last he stepped upon the disc of stone. All the stewards stood with folded arms and bowed heads, while Abdalonim raised his pointed mitre with an air of pride.

Hamilcar questioned the Superintendent of the Ships, an old man with eyelids wrinkled by the wind, and white locks falling to his hips, as though the foam of the tempest still clung to his beard.

He replied that he had sent out a fleet, by way of Gades and Thymiamata, with the object of reaching Ezion-geber, after doubling the South Cape and the promontory of Aromata.

Others had held a westward course for four moons without coming in sight of land; but the prows of their vessels became encumbered with vegetation;

## Hamilcar Barca

the echo of cataracts was constantly heard upon the horizon; the sun was darkened by blood-red mists; the crews were lulled to sleep by a perfume-laden breeze, and at present were so impaired in memory that they had nothing to tell. The rivers of Scythia, however, had been ascended, and expeditions had made their way into Colchis, into the territory of the Jugrians, and into that of the Estians; fifteen hundred maidens had been carried off in the Archipelago, and all foreign vessels sailing beyond Cape Œstrymon had been sunk, that the secret of the routes should not become known. King Ptolemy was keeping back the incense from Schesbar; Syracuse, Elathia, Corsica, and the islands had supplied nothing, and the old pilot lowered his voice to announce that at Rusicada a trireme had been captured by the Numidians, "for they are with them, my lord."

Hamilcar frowned; then, with a sign, he directed the Superintendent of the Caravans to speak; a man wrapped in a brown robe without a girdle, and wearing about his head a long scarf of white material which passed beneath his mouth and fell down behind upon his shoulder.

The caravans had set off regularly at the winter equinox. But of fifteen hundred men who, with excellent camels, new leathern bottles, and a stock of painted cloth, had started for farther Ethiopia, one only had returned to Carthage—the others having died of exhaustion or become insane through the horrors of the desert; and the survivor reported that, far beyond the Black Harousch, beyond the Atarantes and the country of the great apes, he had

## Salamambo

seen boundless realms where the smallest utensils were of gold ; a milk-coloured river broad as a sea ; forests of blue trees ; low hills covered with aromatic shrubs ; monsters basking on the rocks with human faces and eyes which opened like flowers to look at you, and, beyond lakes covered with dragons, mountains of crystal, which sustain the sun. Others had returned from India with peacocks, pepper, and fabrics of novel texture. Those who, in order to buy chalcedony, had followed the road towards the Syrtes and the temple of Ammon, had doubtless perished in the sand. The caravans from Gætulia and Phazzana had furnished their customary productions ; but he could not himself venture to equip any at present.

Hamilcar understood ; the country was in the hands of the Mercenaries. With a deep groan, he leaned upon his other elbow, and the Superintendent of the Farms was so afraid to speak that in spite of his massive shoulders and great red eyeballs, he quaked exceedingly. Above his face, snub-nosed like that of a bulldog, rose a net of bark fibre ; and in his belt of leopard's skin, still covered with the hair, shone two formidable hangers.

No sooner had Hamilcar turned in his direction than he began complaining loudly and calling upon all the Baals. It was not his fault ; he could do nothing ! He had paid due attention to temperatures, conditions of soil, and stars, had planted at the winter solstice, and pruned when the moon was waning, had inspected the slaves and observed economy in the matter of their clothes.

But Hamilcar was irritated by his loquacity. He

## Hamilcar Barca

clicked his tongue, and the man with the hangers went on in a rapid voice—

“Ah, my lord! They have plundered, ransacked, destroyed everything! Three thousand trees have been cut down at Maschala, and at Ubada the granaries have been broken into, and the cisterns filled up! At Tedes they carried off fifteen hundred gomors of flour; at Marazzana they killed the shepherds, consumed the flocks, and burnt your house—your fine house with its beams of cedar wood, where you used to come in the summer time! The slaves of Tuburbo, who were reaping barley, fled to the mountains; and of the asses, the hinnies, the mules, the cattle from Taormina, and the horses of the Orynge<sup>1</sup> breed there is not one left! All carried away! A curse is upon us! I shall never survive it!” Weeping, he resumed, “Ah, if you knew how full the cellars were, and how bright the ploughshares! Ah, what splendid rams we had; what magnificent bulls!”

Hamilcar's anger was choking him. It burst forth.

“Silence! What! Am I a pauper? No lies! Speak the truth! I want to know all that I have lost, down to the last shekel, to the last cab!<sup>1</sup> Abdalonim, bring me the accounts of the vessels and of the caravans, of the farms and of the house! And woe to you if your consciences are uneasy! Go!”

All the stewards retired, walking backwards and stooping till their knuckles touched the ground.

Abdalonim went to the wall, and from a set of pigeon-holes contained therein drew forth knotted

<sup>1</sup> See Glossary.



## Salamambo

cords, strips of linen or papyrus, and shoulder-blades of sheep, covered with fine writing. He laid them at Hamilcar's feet, and placing in his hands a wooden frame containing three cords, upon which were strung balls of gold, silver, and horn, he began—

"One hundred and ninety-two houses in the Mappalia, let to the New Carthaginians at a bekah per moon."

"Nay! That is too much! Deal gently with the poor! And you will write down the names of those who seem to be the most independent, trying at the same time to find out whether they are devoted to the Republic. Well?"

Amazed at this generosity, Abdalonim hesitated.

Hamilcar snatched the strips of linen from his hands.

"What is it, then? Three mansions in the vicinity of Khamon at twelve kesitahs a month! Make it twenty! I am not going to be eaten up by the Rich."

The Overseer of the stewards, after a long obeisance, resumed—

"Lent to Tigillas, until the end of the season, two kikars at thirty-three and a third per cent., maritime interest; to Bar-Malkarth fifteen hundred shekels: the security, thirty slaves. But twelve have died in the saline marshes."

"Not hardy enough!" said the Suffete, laughing. "Never mind! If he wants money, let him have it! We must always lend, and at varying rates of interest, according to the financial position of the individual."

## Hamilcar Barca

Then the servant hastened to read over an account of all the produce yielded by the iron mines of Annaba, the coral fisheries, the purple factories, the farming of the taxes payable by Greek settlers, the export of silver to Arabia, where it was worth ten times as much as gold, and the capture of vessels, a tithe being deducted for the temple of the Goddess. "I declared a quarter less every time, my lord!" Hamilcar was calculating by means of the balls, which clicked beneath his fingers.

"Enough! What have you paid away?"

"To Stratonicles of Corinth and to three Alexandrian merchants, on those letters there (they have been presented) ten thousand Athenian drachmæ and twelve Syrian talents of gold. The keep of the crews amounting to twenty minæ per month for each trireme. . . ."

"I know! How many lost?"

"Here is the account, on these strips of lead," said the Overseer. "As for the vessels chartered jointly, since the cargoes have often had to be thrown overboard, the losses, which were unequal, have been shared alike by the partners. The ropes borrowed from the arsenals it has been impossible to return, and the Syssitia charged eight hundred kesitahs for them before the expedition to Utica."

"They again!" said Hamilcar, bending his head, and for some time he remained as though crushed by the burden of all the hatred of which he felt himself the object. "But I do not perceive the expenses of the house at Megara?"

Abdalonim grew pale, and going to another receptacle, took from it some packets of sycamore

## Salamambo

tablets, strung upon leather cords. Hamilcar listened to him as he read, eager for domestic details, and calmed by the monotony of his voice as it told over the figures. Gradually Abdalonim read more slowly. All at once he dropped the wooden leaves and fell prostrate upon his face, with arms outstretched, in the posture of those condemned to death. Hamilcar, unmoved, picked up the tablets, and his lips fell apart, his eyes dilated, when he perceived an extravagant consumption of meat, fish, birds, wines, and aromatics, all charged to the expenditure of a single day, together with an account of broken vases, dead slaves, and lost rugs.

Abdalonim, still prostrate, told him of the Barbarians' feast. He had been unable to avoid carrying out the order of the Ancients, and it was, moreover, the desire of Salamambo that money should be lavishly spent for the better entertainment of the soldiers.

At the mention of his daughter's name Hamilcar sprang to his feet. Then, with lips compressed, he shrank back upon the cushions; he tore their fringes with his nails, panting and staring before him with eyeballs fixed.

"Get up!" he said, stepping down.

Abdalonim followed him, with trembling knees. But seizing a crowbar, he began with frantic energy to break the pointing between the stones of the floor. A wooden disc flew up, and presently there appeared, throughout the length of the passage, several of the wide lids which closed the pits for the storage of grain.

"You see, Eye of Baal," said the trembling

## Hamilcar Barca

servant, "they have not yet taken everything! And they are each fifty cubits deep, and full to the brim! While you were away I had pits dug in the arsenals, in the gardens, everywhere! Your house is full of corn, as your heart is full of wisdom."

A smile crossed Hamilcar's face. "It is well, Abdalonim!" Then, bending down to his ear: "You will get it from Etruria, from Brutium, from wherever you please, and regardless of price! Get it together and keep it! It is essential that I should hold the entire wheat supply of Carthage in my own hands."

As they reached the end of the corridor, Abdalonim, with one of the keys which hung from his girdle, opened a large quadrangular chamber, divided down the centre by pillars of cedar. Coins of gold, silver, and brass, arranged upon tables or packed in niches, rose to the joists of the roof along each of the four walls. In the corners whole rows of smaller bags were stacked upon huge bales of hippopotamus hide; heaps of copper money made little mounds upon the floor, and here and there a pile which was too high had fallen to pieces, with the effect of a ruined column. Great Carthaginian coins, representing Tanit with a horse beneath a palm tree, were mingled with those of her colonies, stamped with a bull, a star, a globe, or a crescent. Besides these there were coins of every value, every size, and every age, ranged in varying amounts, from the ancient coins of Assyria, thin as a finger nail, to those of Latium, thicker than a man's hand, together with the buttons of Egina, the tablets of

## Salamambo

Bactriana, and the short rods of ancient Lacedæmon ; many were covered with rust or dirt, stained green by water or blackened by fire, having been recovered in nets or among the ruins of cities after a siege. The Suffete had very soon calculated whether the amount in sight tallied with the gains and losses which had just been read out to him, and he was on the point of going when he caught sight of three brass jars absolutely empty. Abdalonim turned his head aside to signify his horror, and Hamilcar, resigning himself, did not utter a word.

They passed along other passages and halls, until at last they reached a door, where, the better to guard it, a man was fastened by the waist to a long chain embedded in the wall, a Roman custom recently introduced at Carthage. His beard and nails had grown to an inordinate length, and he swayed to right and left with the ceaseless motion of animals kept in captivity. No sooner did he recognise Hamilcar than he sprang towards him, crying—

“Mercy, Eye of Baal! Pity! Kill me! For ten years I have not seen the sun! Mercy, in your father’s name!”

• Hamilcar made no reply, but clapped his hands. Three men appeared, and the four of them, all stiffening their arms at the same time, withdrew from its rings the huge bar which closed the door. Hamilcar took a torch and vanished in the darkness.

The chamber, commonly supposed to be the funeral vault of the family, revealed nothing but a wide well. This had been excavated solely in order to

## Hamilcar Barca

mislead robbers, and was empty. Hamilcar passed close beside it ; then, stooping down, caused a mill-stone of great weight to move upon its rollers, and through the opening so made entered an apartment built in the form of a cone.

The walls were covered with scales of brass ; in the midst, on a granite pedestal, rose the statue of one of the Kabiri named Aletes, the discoverer of mines in Celtiberia. Ranged on the ground at its base, in the form of a cross, were broad, golden shields and huge silver vases closed at the neck, of outlandish shape, and entirely useless ; for it was the custom thus to cast large quantities of metal, so that shrinkage and even removal might be practically impossible.

With his torch he lighted a miner's lamp fixed in the idol's head-dress ; and in a moment the chamber was illuminated with lights--green, yellow, blue, violet, wine-coloured, and red as blood. It was full of precious stones contained in golden calabashes attached like lamp-holders to lengths of brass wire, or disposed at the foot of the wall in blocks of native ore. There were chrysolites chipped from the mountain scarp by means of slings, carbuncles formed from the urine of the lynx, glossopetræ which had fallen from the moon, tyanos, diamonds, sandastrium, and beryls, with the three varieties of ruby, the four of sapphire, and the twelve of emerald. They gleamed like splashes of milk, like blue icicles, like silver dust, and shed their light in sheets, in rays, and in stars. • Beside chalcedonies which cure poisons sparkled stones engendered by the thunder. There were topazes from Mount Zabarca to render

## Salamambo

proof against terrors, opals from Bactriana as preventives of abortion, and horns of Ammon which men place beneath their beds that they may cause them to dream.

The lustre of the stones and the blaze of the lamp were reflected in the great shields of gold. Hamilcar stood smiling, with folded arms, revelling not so much in the spectacle as in the knowledge of his wealth. It was inaccessible, inexhaustible, infinite. His ancestors, slumbering beneath his feet, communicated to his heart some sense of their own eternity. He felt himself quite close to the genii that dwell beneath the earth, a sensation akin to the pleasures of the Kabiri; and the great luminous rays falling upon his face seemed to him the extremity of an invisible network which stretched across abysses to bind him to the centre of the world.

An idea made him start, and taking up a position behind the idol, he walked straight before him towards the wall. Then he examined the tattoo marks on his arm for a horizontal line with two others perpendicular to it, which, in Canaanite numerals, indicated the number thirteen. Next he counted the plates of brass until he came to the thirteenth, once more drew back his loose sleeve, and with right hand extended, deciphered other and more complicated lines in another place on his arm, gently moving his fingers the while, like one who plays the lyre. At last he tapped seven times with his thumb, and an entire section of the wall revolved in a single block.

It concealed a kind of cellar, containing things mysterious, nameless, and of incalculable value.

## Hamilcar Barca

Hamilcar descended the three steps, took from a silver vat a lama's skin which was floating upon a black liquid, and remounted the steps.

Abdalonim now preceded him as before, striking his long stick, with its bells about the knob, upon the pavement, and calling out the name of Hamilcar, accompanied by praises and benedictions, before each apartment.

Heaped against the walls of the circular gallery in which all the corridors met were planks of algum wood, sacks of Lawsonia, portions of terra Lemnia, and tortoise-shells full of pearls. The Suffete's robe brushed them as he passed, yet he did not even glance at the huge fragments of amber, a substance formed by the rays of the sun, and almost divine.

A cloud of odoriferous vapour burst forth.

"Open the door!"

They entered.

Naked men were kneading cakes of dough, crushing herbs, stirring embers, pouring oil into jars, and opening and shutting the little oval-shaped cells which were hollowed out in the wall all around the apartment, in such numbers that it resembled the interior of a hive. They were overflowing with myrobalan, bdellium, saffron, and violets. Gums, powders, roots, glass phials, sprays of drop-wort and rose-petals were scattered on every hand, and despite the clouds arising from the styrax which was crackling upon a brazen tripod in the midst, the perfumes were suffocating.

Pale and long as a wax taper, the Superintendent of Perfumes approached Hamilcar, with the intention of crushing a twist of metopion in his hands, while



## Salamambo

two others rubbed his heels with leaves of baccar. These he repelled; they were Cyreneans of vile habits, though valued for their secret knowledge.

In proof of his vigilance, the Superintendent of Perfumes offered the Suffete a taste of malobathrum on a spoon of electrum, and then pricked three Indian bezoars with an awl. His master, familiar with the tricks of the trade, took a horn full of balm, and after holding it near the embers tilted it over his robe, upon which a brown spot made its appearance; the balm was not genuine. Thereupon he looked the Superintendent of Perfumes steadily in the eye, and without a word dashed the gazelle's horn in his face.

But notwithstanding all his indignation at finding adulteration practised to his own hurt, he no sooner perceived some parcels of nard which were being packed for exportation by sea than he gave orders that antimony should be mixed with it to make it heavier.

Then he demanded where three boxes of psagdas, destined for his own use, were to be found. The Superintendent of Perfumes confessed that he knew nothing about them; soldiers, armed with knives, had come yelling in, and he had opened the boxes for them.

"So you are more afraid of them than of me!" cried the Suffete, his eyes blazing at him through the smoke. The tall, pale man began to understand. "Abdalonim! Before sunset let him run the gauntlet of the rods; flay him!"

This loss, though of less consequence than the others, rendered him furious, for despite all his

## Hamilcar Barca

endeavours to banish them from his thoughts, he found himself perpetually confronted by the Barbarians. Their riotous behaviour was connected with his daughter's shame; he was full of wrath against the entire household, because they knew of it and did not tell him. Something impelled him to explore the very depths of his misfortune, and seized by a frenzy of inquisition, he visited the stores of bitumen, wood, anchors, cordage, honey, and wax in the sheds behind the house of business, together with the cloth warehouse, the provision stores, the yard where marble was kept, and the store-room for silphium.

He crossed the gardens to see the craftsmen who were employed at home at work in their own quarters. The goods they produced were sold. There were tailors embroidering mantles, others making nets, others painting cushions or cutting out sandals; Egyptian workmen were polishing papyrus with shells, the shuttles of the weavers clacked, the armourers' anvils rang.

"Forge swords!" said Hamilcar. "Keep on forging! I shall want them." And from his bosom he drew the antelope's skin which had been steeped in poison, that it might be fashioned into a breastplate stronger than breastplates of brass and proof against both steel and flame.

As he approached the workmen, Abdalonim endeavoured to divert his anger by arousing his anger against them, grumbling in disparagement of their labours. "What a piece of work! It is a shame! Really, my lord is too good." Hamilcar walked off without listening to him.

## Salamambo

He slackened his pace, for the paths were blocked by great trees charred from top to bottom, such as one sees where herdsmen have encamped in the woods ; the fences, too, were broken down, the water from the channels was running to waste, and fragments of glass and the bones of monkeys could be seen in the midst of the miry puddles. A shred of cloth was hanging from the bushes here and there ; beneath the citron trees the rotten flowers made a yellow heap of manure. The servants, in fact, had let everything go to ruin, believing that the master would never return.

At every step he discovered some fresh calamity, a proof the more of the thing he had refused to hear. Here was he, soiling his purple boots with the filth he trod upon, and yet he had not got these men before him, at the end of a catapult, that he might send them flying into a thousand pieces ! He felt humiliated for having defended them ; he was cheated—betrayed, but he could take vengeance neither upon the soldiers, nor upon the Ancients, nor upon Salamambo, nor upon anyone else. Nevertheless his fury sought a victim, and at a single stroke he condemned every slave employed in the gardens to the mines.

Abdalonim shuddered whenever he saw him approach the stock-pens. But Hamilcar took the footpath to the mill, whence a doleful melody was proceeding.

Revolving amid the dust were two heavy mill-stones, that is to say, two cones of porphyry, one above the other, the uppermost of which contained a funnel and turned upon the second under the

## Hamilcar Barca

impulsion of strong bars. These were driven by men who pushed with their chests and arms, while others, in harness, were pulling. About their arm-pits the breast-band had formed festering scabs, such as may be seen upon donkeys' withers, and the loose black rags which formed a scanty covering for their loins, attached by one end only, flapped about their thighs like long tails. Their eyes were red, the irons clanked upon their feet, their chests rose and fell in unison. Fixed upon their mouths by two small chains of bronze, were muzzles designed to make it impossible for them to eat the flour, while their hands were encased in fingerless gauntlets to prevent them from taking any up.

At the master's entrance the wooden bars creaked more loudly; and a grating sound arose from the grinding of the corn. Several fell on their knees, and the others, keeping on, passed over them.

He summoned Giddenem, the Governor of the Slaves, and that personage made his appearance, parading his dignity in the richness of his costume; for his tunic was of fine purple, divided at the sides, his ears were drawn down by heavy rings, and a golden cord, intended to fasten together the strips of cloth which enveloped his legs, rose from his ankles to his haunches like a serpent coiled about a tree. In his fingers, which were laden with rings, he carried a necklace of beads of jet; in order to detect those who were subject to epilepsy.

By a sign Hamilcar directed him to take off the

## Salamambo

muzzles, and forthwith they fell upon the floor with the cries of famished beasts, burying their faces in the heaps in order to devour it.

"You have reduced them too low!" said the Suffete.

Giddenem replied that it was necessary if they were to be kept in hand.

"It was hardly worth while sending you to the slaves' school at Syracuse. Have the others brought!"

Cooks, butlers, stable lads, errand boys, litter-bearers, bath attendants, and women with their children were all drawn up, in a single line across the garden, from the house of business to the deer park. They held their breath. All Megara was pervaded by a mighty stillness. Below the catacombs the sunlight stretched away across the lagoon; the peacocks whimpered, and Hamilcar walked onwards, step by step.

"What am I to do with these old men?" he said. "Sell them! There are too many Gauls; they are drunkards! And too many Cretans; they are liars! Buy me some Cappadocians, Asiatics, and negroes."

He was surprised to see so few children. "There should be births in the house every year, Giddenem! Leave the huts open every night and let them mingle together as they please."

Then he had the thieves, the lazy, and the mutinous pointed out. He distributed punishment and censured Giddenem, who bowed his low forehead, with its wide, intersecting eyebrows.

"See, Eye of Baal," he said, pointing to a sturdy

## Hamilcar, Barca

Libyan, "yonder man was caught with a rope about his neck."

"Ah! You wish to die?" said the Suffete contemptuously.

"Yes!" answered the slave, in a fearless tone.

And Hamilcar, indifferent alike to the example so set and to the pecuniary loss, said to the attendants, "Take him away!"

Perhaps he had it in his mind to offer a sacrifice, that a self-inflicted injury might avert others more terrible.

Giddenem had hidden the maimed behind the rest, but Hamilcar caught sight of them.

"Who cut off your arm, you?"

"The soldiers, Eye of Baal."

Then, to a Samnite, who was tottering like a wounded heron, "And you: who did that to you?"

It was the Governor, who had broken his leg with an iron bar.

Such senseless barbarity exasperated the Suffete, and he snatched the jet necklace from Giddenem's hands.

"Curses on the dog that injures the flock! What, cripple the slaves, gracious Tanit! Ah, you would ruin your master, would you? Let him be suffocated in the dunghill! And those who are missing: where are they? Have you murdered them, you and the soldiers between you?"

So terrible was his countenance that the women fled. Giddenem was frantically kissing his sandals; Hamilcar stood over him with arms uplifted, while the slaves, shrinking back, formed a great ring about them.

## Salamambo

But with intellect as clear as in the very heat of battle, he called to mind a thousand odious things, vile insults to which he had closed his eyes, and, lit up by his wrath as by the lightning of a tempest, all his calamities came before him at once in a single flash. The stewards of the country estates had fled from terror of the soldiery, it might be by collusion with them; everyone was deceiving him; he had restrained himself too long.

"Bring them here!" he shouted. "Fetch red-hot irons and brand them on the forehead, as cowards!"

Then fetters were brought, iron collars, and knives, and distributed about the middle of the garden, together with chains for those condemned to the mines, cippi for compressing the legs, shackles to confine the shoulders, and scorpions, or whips with threefold lashes terminating in brazen claws.

All the victims were placed facing the sun, in the direction of Moloch the devourer, stretched upon the ground on their faces or on their backs; those condemned to the lash being set upright against trees, with two men beside them, one to count the blows, the other to inflict them.

This he did with both arms, and the thongs, as they whistled through the air, sent the bark of the plane trees flying. Blood was sprinkled over the leaves like rain, while red masses writhed and screamed at the feet of the trunks. "Those who were being put in irons tore their faces with their nails. The creaking of wooden screws could be heard; there was a sound of dull blows; now and again the air was rent by a sudden shrill cry. In

## Hamilcar Barca

the neighbourhood of the kitchens men surrounded by tattered garments and shorn hair were fanning embers into life, and there was a scent of burning flesh upon the air. Swooning, but supported by the bonds upon their arms, those under the lash rolled their heads upon their shoulders, with closed eyes. The others, looking on, began to scream with terror, and the lions, perhaps remembering the feast, stretched themselves, yawning, against the sides of their pits.

Then Salamambo was seen on the platform of her terrace, pacing hastily backwards and forwards, in wild alarm. Hamilcar caught sight of her. It seemed to him that she was raising her arms towards him to entreat for pardon, and with a gesture of horror he disappeared within the elephants' enclosure.

These animals were the pride of the great Carthaginian houses. They had carried their owners' ancestors, had been victorious in war, and were venerated as favourites of the Sun.

Those of Megara were the most powerful in Carthage. Before leaving, Hamilcar had exacted from Abdalonim an oath that he would take care of them. But they had died of their mutilations, and three only remained, lying in the dust in the midst of the court, before the wreck of their manger.

Recognising him, they came up to him.

One had its ears horribly slit, another a great wound on the knee, and the third had its trunk cut off. Yet they looked sadly at him, like reasoning creatures, and the one which had no trunk lowered its huge head and bent its knees, trying



## Salamambo

to stroke him gently with the hideous tip of the stump.

At the animal's caress two tears started from his eyes. He rushed upon Abdalonim.

"Ah, wretch! The cross, the cross!"

Abdalonim fell backwards, fainting.

From behind the purple factories, whence blue smoke was rising slowly into the air, came the sound of a jackal's bark. Hamilcar paused. At the thought of his son, as at the touch of a god, he had grown suddenly calm. He foresaw a prolongation of his power, an indefinite continuation of his personality; and the slaves could not understand what it was that had soothed him thus.

Making his way towards the purple factories, he passed before the ergastulum, a long building erected in a square pit with a narrow path round it and four flights of steps at the angles.

Iddibal was doubtless waiting until nightfall before completing his signal. There is no immediate reason for haste, thought Hamilcar, and he went down into the prison. Some shouted: "Come back!" but the boldest followed him.

The open door was swinging in the wind; the twilight entered through the narrow loopholes; inside, broken chains could be seen hanging from the walls. Nothing more was left of the prisoners of war.

Hamilcar became unusually pale, and those who were leaning over the edge of the pit saw him steady himself with one hand against the wall to keep from falling.

But three times in succession came the jackal's

## Hamilcar Barca

cry. Hamilcar raised his head ; he made no gesture, vouchsafed no word. Then, when the sun had fully set, he disappeared behind the hedge of nopals, and that night, as he entered the assembly of the Rich, in the temple of Eschmoun—

“Lights of the Baals,” he said, “I accept the command of the Punic forces against the Barbarian army !” •

## VIII

### THE BATTLE OF THE MACAR

**T**HE following day he obtained from the Syssitia two hundred and twenty-three thousand kikars of gold, and imposed a tax of fourteen shekels upon the Rich. The women even contributed; the children were paid for, and, what was a monstrous innovation upon Carthaginian customs, he compelled the colleges of priests to furnish money.

He requisitioned all horses, all mules, and all arms. The property of some, who attempted to conceal the amount of their wealth, was sold, and to discourage avarice in others, he himself gave sixty suits of armour and fifteen hundred gomors of flour, a contribution equal in itself to that made by the company of ivory merchants.

In order to buy soldiers he sent to Liguria for three thousand mountaineers accustomed to fighting with bears; they were paid six moons in advance, at the rate of four minæ a day.

Nevertheless an army was essential. But he did not accept all the citizens, as Hanno had done. First he rejected those of sedentary occupation, then those who carried too much flesh or looked faint-hearted; while he accepted men of evil repute, the scum of Megara, the sons of Barbarians, and

## The Battle of the Mācar

freedmen. In recompense he promised New Carthaginians the rights of full citizenship.

His first care was to reform the Legion. These ornamental youths, who looked upon themselves as the military sovereigns of the Republic, had been under their own control. He reduced their officers to the ranks; he treated them with severity, and made them run, leap, scale the acclivity of Byrsa without pausing for breath, hurl javelins, wrestle, and sleep at night in the squares. Their families came to see them and pitied them.

He ordered shorter swords and stouter boots. He fixed the number of servants, and reduced the amount of baggage, and in spite of the pontiff's protests he appropriated three hundred Roman *pila*, which had been preserved in the temple of Moloch.

Out of those which had returned from Utica and others belonging to private individuals he organised a phalanx of seventy-two elephants, and made them formidable. He armed their conductors with mallets and chisels, that they might split their skulls during battle if they should become unmanageable.

He would not permit the Great Council to appoint his generals. The Ancients attempted to oppose his action on the ground of its illegality, but he overrode their objection. No further complaint was ventured upon; everything gave way before the impetuosity of his genius.

On his own shoulders he took the entire responsibility for the war, the government, and the finances, and in order to forestall accusations he demanded that his accounts should be examined by the Suffete Hannō.

## Salamambo

He set men to work upon the ramparts, and demolished the old inner walls, which were of no further use, in order to obtain stone. But the difference in fortune, which had taken the place of the hierarchy of race, still maintained the distinction between the descendants of the vanquished and those of their conquerors ; so that the patricians watched the destruction of these ruins with irritation in their eyes, while the plebeians rejoiced without exactly knowing why.

Troops under arms marched through the streets from morning till night ; every moment the sound of trumpets was heard ; chariots passed by, laden with shields, tents, and spears ; the courts were full of women, tearing lint ; enthusiasm spread from one to another, and the entire Republic was infused with the spirit of Hamilcar.

He had divided his soldiers into even numbers, taking care to place a strong man and a weak one alternately throughout the whole length of the files, so that the less sturdy or the more cowardly might be at once led and driven forward by two others. But with his three thousand Ligurians, and the best of the Carthaginians, he could form no more than a simple phalanx of four thousand and ninety-six heavy armed men, protected by bronze helmets, and wielding ashen lances fourteen cubits long.

Two thousand young men were each equipped with a sling, a dagger, and sandals. These were supported by eight hundred others, armed with a round shield and a sword of the Roman type.

The heavy cavalry was composed of the remaining nineteen hundred guards of the Legion, clad with

## The Battle of the Macar

laminæ of red bronze, like the Clinabarians of Assyria. There were more than four hundred mounted archers of the type called Tarentine, with caps of weasel's skin, double-edged battle-axes, and leathern tunics. Lastly, twelve hundred negroes, from the quarter of the caravans, were distributed among the Clinabarians, that they might run beside the stallions, holding on to their manes with one hand. Everything was ready, yet Hamilcar did not set forth.

Frequently he would leave Carthage by night, alone, and make his way past the lagoon towards the mouths of the Macar. Did he mean to make common cause with the Mercenaries? His house was surrounded by the Ligurians who were encamped in the Mappalia.

The apprehensions of the Rich seemed to be justified when one day three hundred Barbarians were seen approaching the walls. The Suffete opened the gates for them; impelled either by fear or by fidelity, they had deserted the cause of their comrades, and were hastening to join their master.

Hamilcar's return had caused the Mercenaries no surprise; in their minds he could not die. He was coming back to redeem his promises: a hope which was in no way absurd, so deep was the gulf between the nation and the army. Moreover, they did not consider themselves to blame; they had forgotten the feast.

The spies whom they surprised undeceived them, and the irreconcilables among them enjoyed a triumph; even the half-hearted became incensed. Besides, they were utterly weary of the two sieges;

## Salamambo

they were making no progress ; a battle would be better ! Many men, too, were leaving the ranks and wandering about the country. The news of the preparations brought them back, and made Matho leap for joy. "At last !" he cried. "At last !"

The resentment he had cherished against Salamambo now became diverted towards Hamilcar. His hatred saw a definite object before it, and vengeance being easier to conceive, he almost believed that it was in his hands, and already gloated over it. At the same time he was seized by a loftier, tenderer passion, consumed by a more intense desire. By turns he pictured himself among the soldiers, brandishing the Suffete's head upon a pike, and in her chamber upon the purple couch, clasping the maiden in his arms, covering her face with kisses, passing his hands over her long dark hair ;—a dream which was torture to him, because impossible of realisation. His comrades having appointed him *schalischim*, he vowed to prosecute the war ; the certainty that he would never survive it impelled him to make it a war to the death.

He came to Spendius' tent.

"You take your men !" he said ; "I will bring mine. Send warning to Autharitus ! If Hamilcar attacks us, we are lost. Do you hear ? Get up !"

Spendius was thunderstruck by this authoritative air. As a rule, Matho allowed himself to be led, and such outbursts of energy as he had shown had quickly died away. But now he seemed at once calmer and more terrible ; his eyes flashed with a haughty determination, like the flame of a sacrifice.

## The Battle of the Maçar

The Greek paid no heed to his arguments. He was occupying one of the Carthaginian tents bordered with pearls; he slaked his thirst from silver cups containing cooling drinks, played at *cottabus*, let his hair grow, and prosecuted the siege in a leisurely fashion. Moreover, he had obtained information from within the town, and in the certainty that within a few days it would open its gates was very loth to leave it.

Narr' Havas, who was wandering to and fro between the three armies, happened just then to be at hand. He seconded the opinion of Spendius, and even blamed the Libyan for being willing, in the excess of his courage, to abandon their enterprise.

"Leave us," cried Matho, "if you are afraid! You promised us pitch, sulphur, elephants, foot-soldiers, and horses! Where are they?"

Narr' Havas reminded him that he had destroyed Hanno's last cohorts; as for the elephants, they were being hunted in the woods, the infantry were being armed, the horses were on the way. The Numidian made eyes like a woman, and smiled in an irritating manner as he caressed the ostrich plume which swept his shoulder. Now that he was face to face with him Matho had nothing to say in reply. •

But in came a man whom no one knew, streaming with perspiration, in a state of terror. His feet were bleeding, his belt was undone, his breathing shook his lean flanks as though they would burst, and he spoke in an unintelligible dialect, with staring eyes, as though describing some battle.



## Salamambo

The king rushed outside and summoned his horsemen.

They drew up upon the plain, forming a circle before him. Narr' Havas sat his horse with bent head, biting his lips. At last he separated the men into two equal troops, directed the first to wait for him, then with an imperious gesture carried off the others at a gallop, and disappeared upon the horizon, in the direction of the mountains.

"Master," murmured Spendius, "I do not like these strange occurrences—the Suffete's return, Narr' Havas' departure. . . ."

"Oh, what does that matter?" said Matho contemptuously.

It was an additional reason for forestalling Hamilcar by rejoining Autharitus. But if they raised the siege of the towns the inhabitants would come out and attack them in the rear, while the Carthaginians would meet them in front. Much talk ended in their adopting the following measures, which were immediately put into execution.

Spendius, with fifteen thousand men, betook himself to the bridge across the Macar, three miles distant from Utica, and fortified its angles with four huge towers armed with catapults. By means of the trunks of trees, fragments of rock, fences of interwoven thorn and stone walls, every footpath and ravine in the mountains was blockaded; heaps of herbage, to be lighted as signals, were accumulated upon their summits, and shepherds capable of seeing at great distances were posted on them here and there.

Of course Hamilcar would not come by the

## The Battle of the Macar

mountain of the Hot Springs, as Hanno had done. He would conclude that Autharitus, who was master of the interior, would close that route against him. Then a check at the outset of the campaign would be his ruin, while a victorious engagement would soon have to be fought over again when the Mercenaries were further away. He could still land at the cape of Grapes and thence march upon one of the towns. But by so doing he would place himself between the two armies, an act of imprudence which he was incapable of committing with his scanty forces. He would therefore be compelled to pass around the base of Mount Ariana, and then, turning to the left to avoid the mouths of the Macar, to make straight for the bridge. It was there that Matho was awaiting him.

At night, by torchlight, the Libyan superintended the pioneers. He hastened to Hippo-Zarytus, to the works in the mountains, came back, and took no rest. Spendius envied him his energy ; but with regard to the management of spies, the choice of sentinels, the manipulation of the engines and defensive measures in general, Matho listened submissively to his comrade. Of Salammbo they no longer spoke ; the one because he never thought of her, the other because a kind of modesty prevented him. • •

Frequently he went off towards Carthage to obtain, if possible, a glimpse of Hamilcar's troops. His eyes searched the horizon ; he would lie flat on his face and mistake the muffled throbbing of his arteries for the sound of an army.

He told Spendius that if Hamilcar did not come

## Salammbo

before three days had expired he would advance with all his men and offer him battle. Two more days passed by. Spendius kept him back, but on the morning of the sixth he set out.

The Carthaginians were not less impatient of the progress of the war than the Barbarians. In the tents as in the houses there was the same longing, the same torture of anxiety; everyone asked what it was that was delaying Hamilcar.

From time to time he ascended the cupola of the temple of Eschmoun to station himself beside the Herald of the Moons. He kept watch also upon the wind.

One day, the third of the month Tibby, he was seen coming down from the Acropolis in great haste. A loud clamour arose in the Mappalia; the streets were soon in commotion, and everywhere the soldiers began to don their armour surrounded by weeping women who threw themselves upon their breasts; then they hurried to the square of Khamon and took their places in the ranks. It was forbidden to follow them or even to speak to them, nor might anyone approach the ramparts; for some minutes the entire city was wrapped in silence like a great tomb. The soldiers leaned upon their lances, absorbed in thought, the rest remained within doors and sighed.

At sunset the army marched out by the western gate, but instead of taking the road to Tunis, or making for the mountains in the direction of Utica, they kept on by the edge of the sea, and soon reached the Lagoqn, where circular spaces, all white with salt, glittered like gigantic dishes of silver forgotten upon the shore.

## The Battle of the Macar

Then the pools of water became more numerous. The ground grew gradually softer ; one's feet sank in ; but Hamilcar did not turn back. He kept on at the head of the column, and his horse, spotted with yellow like a dragon, made his way through the mud, flinging foam about him and straining vigorously with his loins. Night fell, without a moon. Some called out that they were on the point of perishing. Hamilcar snatched their arms from them and gave them to the attendants. Still the mud grew deeper and deeper. They had to mount the baggage animals, others clung to the horses' tails, the strong dragged the weak, and the corps of Ligurians goaded on the infantry with the points of their pikes. The gloom became more intense. They had lost their way, and all came to a standstill.

Then the Suffete's slaves went on in advance to find the buoys which by his order had been placed at regular intervals. They gave calls in the darkness, and the army followed them at a distance.

At last the ground offered some resistance to their feet. Then a whitish curve loomed vaguely before them ; and they found themselves on the bank of the Macar. In spite of the cold, no fires were lighted.

About midnight gusts of wind arose. Hamilcar had the soldiers awakened, but no trumpet was blown ; their captains tapped them gently on the shoulder.

A tall man went down into the water, which did not reach to his waist. It was possible to cross.

The Suffete gave orders that thirty-two of the

## Salamambo

elephants should be stationed in the river a hundred paces further on, while the others, lower down, were to stay the ranks of men which were carried away by the current ; and all, holding their arms above their heads, crossed the Macar as though they had been between two walls. He had observed that when the west wind drove the sand before it the river became obstructed and a natural causeway was formed across its entire width.

He was now on the left bank, facing Utica, and upon a vast plain ; an advantage for his elephants, which were the mainstay of his army.

This stroke of genius roused the soldiers to enthusiasm ; they were once more filled with boundless confidence. They longed to charge the Barbarians forthwith, but the Suffete made them take a couple of hours' rest. At sunrise they moved forward into the plain in three lines : the elephants first, then the light infantry, followed by the cavalry, while the phalanx marched behind.

The Barbarians encamped at Utica, and the fifteen thousand about the bridge were surprised to observe an undulating motion of the soil in the distance. The wind, blowing very strongly, drove the sand before it in clouds, which rose as though torn from the ground, mounted aloft in long, pale streamers, then rent themselves asunder, only to form anew, thereby concealing the Punic army from the Mercenaries. The horns which rose from the rims of the helmets led some to think they could discern a herd of cattle ; others, misled by the movement of the cloaks, maintained that they could distinguish wings, while those who had travelled widely shrugged

## The Battle of the Macar

their shoulders and explained everything by the illusion of the mirage. Some huge object continued nevertheless to approach. Shreds of vapour, delicate as a breath, sailed across the surface of the desert; the sun, now higher, shone with greater brilliance; a fierce light, which seemed to vibrate, made the depths of the sky appear still more remote, and by its effect upon objects made it impossible to calculate distance. On every side the huge plain unfolded itself as far as eye could see, and the almost imperceptible undulations of the ground stretched away to the utmost limit of the horizon, terminating in a great blue line, which one knew must be the sea. The two armies had come out of their tents to watch, while the inhabitants of Utica thronged the ramparts to obtain a better view.

At last they made out several transverse bars, bristling with uniform points. The bars became denser, larger; dark mounds swayed from side to side; suddenly square bushes came into view; they were elephants and lances. A single shout: "The Carthaginians!" arose, and without signal or command the soldiers from Utica and those from the bridge rushed helter-skelter to fall in a body upon Hamilcar.

At that name Spendius shuddered. "Hamilcar!" he repeated, breathing shortly; "Hamilcar!" And Matho was not there. What was to be done? Flight was impossible. So unexpected was this event, such was his terror of the Suffete, and so urgent was the need for immediate decision, that he was distracted; he saw himself pierced by a thousand swords, decapitated, dead. But they were

## Salamambo

calling for him; thirty thousand men were ready to follow him, and he was suddenly filled with indignation against himself. He turned his thoughts to the hope of victory, which was full of happy prospects, and felt himself more dauntless than Epaminondas. He smeared his cheeks with vermillion to conceal his pallor, then buckled on greaves and breastplate, swallowed a goblet of pure wine, and ran to join his division as it hurried to meet that from Utica.

So rapidly did they come together that the Suffete had no time to draw up his men in order of battle. Gradually he slackened his pace. The elephants came to a halt; and their heavy heads, laden with ostrich plumes, swayed to and fro as they lashed their shoulders with their trunks.

At the extremities of the spaces between them the cohorts of velites could be seen, while farther off were the great helmets of the Clinabarians, blades flashing in the sunlight, breastplates, plumes, and waving standards. But the Carthaginian army, only eleven thousand three hundred and ninety-six strong, scarcely seemed to contain them, for it formed a closely compacted parallelogram, narrow from side to side.

When the Barbarians, who were thrice their number, saw how weak they were, they were seized with extravagant delight. Hamilcar was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps he had remained behind. Besides, what did it matter? Their courage was reinforced by the contempt they felt for these tradesmen; and before Spendius had given orders for the manœuvre, all had understood it and were in the act of carrying it out.

## The Battle of the Macar

They deployed in a long straight line, overlapping the wings of the Punic army, with the object of surrounding it completely. But when the two forces were within three hundred paces of one another the elephants, instead of advancing, turned round; lo and behold! the Clinabarians, facing about, followed suit, and when the Mercenaries perceived all the archers hurrying after them their amazement redoubled. So the Carthaginians were afraid! They were in flight! A mighty shout of ridicule broke out among the troops of the Barbarians, and Spendius, aloft upon his dromedary, cried, "Ah, I knew it! Forward! Forward!"

Javelins, darts, and missiles from slings leapt forth simultaneously. The elephants, whose haunches were pricked by the arrows, began to gallop faster; a great dust enveloped them, and they vanished like shadows in a mist.

But from the distance there came a great noise of tramping, dominated by the shrill sound of trumpets, furiously blown. The space in front of the Barbarians, full of dust-clouds and tumult, drew them towards it like a whirlpool, and some hurled themselves into it. Cohorts of infantry appeared; they closed their ranks, and at the same time all the others saw the foot-soldiers running up with horsemen galloping.

Hamilcar, in fact, had ordered the phalanx to break up its sections, and the elephants, the light-armed troops, and the cavalry to pass through the open spaces thus created, and make with all speed for the wings; and so well had he calculated the distance of the Barbarians that at the moment when



## Salamambo

they came up with it the entire Carthaginian army formed a long straight line.

In the midst bristled the phalanx, consisting of syntagmata, or solid squares, each with sixteen men on every side. The leaders of the files appeared surrounded by long, sharp lance-points, which extended to various lengths beyond them, for the first six ranks crossed their sarissæ, holding them by the middle, and the ten ranks behind them rested theirs on the shoulders of their comrades, ranged in succession before them. All had their faces half concealed beneath the visors of their helmets; their right legs were protected by greaves of bronze; wide cylindrical shields came down as low as their knees, and the formidable quadrangular mass moved all in one piece, possessing, as it seemed, at once the life of an animal and the uniform action of a machine. Flanking it in regular order were two bands of elephants, which shook off with a shudder the arrow-splinters that had fastened in their black hides. The Indians, crouching on their withers, amid bunches of white plumes, kept them in check with the flat heads of their spears, while in the towers men hidden up to the height of their shoulders were moving distaffs of iron tipped with lighted tow along the arcs of their great bent bows. To right and to left of the elephants hovered the slingers, with one sling about their loins, a second upon their heads, and a third in their right hands. The Clinabarians, who followed, each with a negro at his side, pointed their lances between the ears of their horses, which, like themselves, were completely covered with gold. Behind them, in open

## The Battle of the Macar

order, came the light-armed soldiers, carrying shields of lynx-skin, with the javelins they held in their left hands projecting beyond them, while the Tarentines, leading a pair of horses tied together, supported this wall of soldiers at either end.

The army of the Barbarians, on the other hand, had been unable to preserve its alignment. Owing to its excessive length, gaps and irregularities had formed themselves, while the men were panting and breathless with running.

The phalanx moved ponderously forward, thrusting with all its sarissæ, and before its mighty weight the line of Mercenaries, always too slender, gave way in the centre.

Thereupon the Carthaginian wings opened out to envelop them, the elephants following. The phalanx, with lances held obliquely, cleft the Barbarians asunder, leaving two huge fragments in confusion, which the wings, by means of slings and arrows, drove back upon the soldiers of the phalanx. With the exception of two hundred Numidians which bore down upon the right squadron of Clibanarians, the Mercenaries had no cavalry to drive them off. The rest found themselves hemmed in and unable to escape from the lines which encircled them. The danger was imminent; the need for decision urgent.

Spandius ordered simultaneous attacks upon both flanks of the phalanx, with the object of cutting straight through it. But the shorter ranks, slipping through the longer ones, returned to their positions, and the phalanx, no less formidable on the sides than it was but a moment ago in front, turned to face the Barbarians.

## Salamambo

They struck at the hafts of the sarissæ, but the cavalry, behind them, impeded their attack, and the phalanx, protected by the elephants, contracted and expanded, presenting itself successively as a square, a cone, a rhombus, a trapezium, and a pyramid. Inside it, a twofold movement was constantly going on from front to rear, for those who were at the lower end of the files kept running towards the foremost ranks, which, either from fatigue or because of their wounded, fell back to a lower position. The Barbarians found themselves crushed against the phalanx. Utterly unable to advance, it resembled an ocean whereon danced ruddy crests and scales of brass, while the bright bucklers rose and fell like silver foam. Now a broad current swept over it from end to end, now it flowed back again, and in the midst a ponderous mass held its ground unshaken. By turns the lances rose and fell; elsewhere so rapid was the play of naked swords that their points alone were visible, while squadrons of cavalry drove back the enemy in circles which closed eddying behind them.

Above the voices of the captains, the blare of clarions, and the grating of lyres came the sound of leaden balls and pellets of clay as they whistled through the air, dashing out brains and knocking swords from the hands that held them. The wounded, sheltering themselves, with the aid of one arm, beneath their shields, held their swords before them with the hilts planted upon the ground, and others, amidst pools of blood, turned round to bite the enemy's heels. So dense was the multitude, so thick the dust, and so mighty the uproar that nothing

## The Battle of the Macar

could be distinguished ; the cowards who offered to yield were not even heard. Those whose hands were empty grappled one another in a fierce embrace ; chests were crushed against breastplates, and bodies hung, dead, with head lolling backwards, in the convulsive grip of a pair of arms. A company of sixty Umbrians, with feet firmly planted, maintained their ground unshaken, holding their pikes before their eyes, and grinding their teeth as they drove back two syntagmata at once. Herdsmen from Epirus rushed at the left squadron of Clinabarians, and whirling their staves, seized the horses by the mane ; the animals threw their riders and fled across the plain. Punic slingers, scattered here and there, stood aghast with bewilderment. The phalanx began to waver, the captains ran distractedly to and fro, the rear files urged the soldiers on, the Barbarians, forming their ranks afresh, returned to the attack, and victory was in their grasp.

But a cry broke forth, a cry that struck terror to the heart, a yell of rage and pain. The seventy-two elephants were charging in double line, for Hamilcar had delayed letting them loose upon the Mercenaries until all the latter should be massed together in one place. The Indians had goaded them so vigorously that blood was trickling down over their great ears. Their trunks, smeared with red lead and standing erect in the air, resembled red serpents ; their chests were armed with spears and their backs with cuirasses, their tusks were lengthened by blades of steel curved like sabres, and in order to render them fiercer, they had been intoxicated with a mixture of pepper, pure wine, and

## Salamambo

incense. They shook their collars of bells and trumpeted, and the elephantarchs bent their heads beneath the stream of fiery darts which began to fly from the tops of the towers.

To offer them a stouter resistance, the Barbarians rushed together in a compact mass, into the midst of which the elephants hurled themselves with impetuosity. The spurs upon their breasts cleft the cohorts like the prows of ships, and they flowed seething backwards. With their trunks they either strangled the men or snatched them from the ground and passed them over their heads to the soldiers in the towers; with their tusks they disembowelled them, tossing them into the air, and from their fangs of ivory long entrails hung down like a bundle of ropes from a mast. The Barbarians attempted to put out their eyes and to cut their hamstrings; others, creeping beneath their bellies, buried their swords in them up to the hilt and were themselves crushed to death, while the most fearless of all clung to their girths, and in spite of flames, balls, and arrows, sawed persistently at the leather until the tower collapsed like a tower of stones. Fourteen of the animals on the extreme right, infuriated by their wounds, turned to attack those in the second rank, whereupon the Indians seized each his mallet and chisel, and applying the latter to a suture of the skull, struck a heavy blow with all his might. Down sank the huge creatures, falling one upon the other, forming, as it were, a mountain, and amid this heap of dead bodies and armour a monstrous elephant called *Wrath of Baal*, which had become entangled by the leg in

## The Battle of the Macar

chains, remained roaring until nightfall, with an arrow in its eye.

But the others, like conquerors who revel in the extermination of their enemy, overthrew, crushed, and trampled upon corpses and remains with relentless ferocity. In order to repulse the maniples which crowded in serried rings about them they gyrated upon their hind legs with a ceaseless rotatory motion, ever advancing meanwhile. The Carthaginians felt a fresh access of vigour, and the battle began anew.

The Barbarians were growing weaker; some Greek hoplites threw down their arms, and the others were seized with panic. Spendius was seen leaning forward upon his dromedary and pricking its shoulders with a pair of javelins. Thereupon all rushed headlong across the wings, and ran towards Utica.

The Clinabarians, whose horses were exhausted, made no attempt to overtake them. The Ligurians, worn out with thirst, were shouting for an advance to the river. But the Carthaginians, surrounded by the syntagmata, had suffered less, and were stamping with eagerness for the vengeance which they saw escaping them. They were already charging in pursuit of the Mercenaries, when Hamilcar appeared.

With reins of silver he checked his spotted steed, which was covered with sweat. The bands attached to the horns of his helmet flapped behind him in the wind, and he had placed his oval shield beneath his left thigh. At a motion of his three-pointed spear the army came to a halt.

## Salamambo

Promptly each of the Tarentines sprang from the horse he was riding upon the second, and set forth to right and to left towards the river and the town.

At their leisure the phalanx exterminated all that was left of the Barbarians, who presented their throats to the sword and closed their eyes. Others defended themselves to the death, and these, like mad dogs, were felled from a distance with stones. Hamilcar had recommended that prisoners should be taken, but such delight did the Carthaginians take in plunging their swords into the bodies of the Barbarians that they only obeyed him grudgingly. Finding themselves too hot, they set to work bare-armed, like reapers, and when they paused for breath, their eyes followed a horseman galloping after a fugitive across the open. Catching him at last by the hair, he held him thus for some time, and then slaughtered him with a blow of his axe.

Night fell. Carthaginians and Barbarians had alike disappeared. The elephants, which had taken to flight, were wandering about on the horizon, with their towers on fire. Here and there in the darkness they burnt like beacons half lost in mist, and throughout the plain no other motion could be discerned save the ripple of the river, swollen by the corpses which it was carrying to the sea.

Two hours later Matho arrived. Indistinctly, by the light of the stars, he perceived long, irregular heaps lying upon the ground.

They were files of Barbarians. He stooped down. All were dead. He called into the distance, but no voice replied.

That very morning he, with his soldiers, had

## The Battle of the Macar

left Hippo-Zarytus to march upon Carthage. At Utica, the army of Spendius had just departed, and the inhabitants were beginning to set fire to the engines of war. All had fought with fury. But the uproar which arose from the neighbourhood of the bridge increasing in an incomprehensible manner, Matho had hurried across the mountain by the shortest road, and as the Barbarians had fled by way of the plain he had met no one.

Opposite him small pyramidal masses arose in the darkness, and nearer at hand, on this side of the river, were motionless lights, on a level with the ground. The Carthaginians, in fact, had retired across the bridge, and the Suffete had stationed numerous outposts on the other bank, in order to mislead the Barbarians.

Matho, still advancing, thought he could make out the Punic ensigns, for up in the air there appeared horses' heads, which did not move, fixed to the tops of invisible stacks of lance shafts, and farther off he heard a great uproar, the sound of songs and clinking cups.

Then, not knowing where he was, nor how to find Spendius, overwhelmed with distress, bewildered, lost in the darkness, he returned, in still greater haste, by the same road. The pale light of dawn was appearing when from the mountain heights he caught sight of the town, with the framework of the engines blackened by the flames, like giant skeletons leaning against the walls.

Everything was wrapped in a strange silence and prostration. Among his soldiers, in the openings of the tents, men, almost naked, lay on their backs,



## Salamambo

asleep, or with forehead resting on one arm, supported by a cuirass. Some were unwinding blood-stained bandages from their legs. Those past recovery were rolling their heads very slowly from side to side, while others dragged themselves along to bring them drink. The sentries were marching to and fro in the narrow roadways to keep themselves warm, or standing in a sullen attitude with shouldered pike and face turned towards the horizon.

Matho found Spendius sheltered beneath a strip of cloth hung upon two sticks fixed in the ground. His hands were clasped about his knee, his head hung down. For a long time they remained without speaking.

"Defeated!" murmured Matho at last.

"Yes," replied Spendius in a voice of gloom; "defeated!" And to every question his answer was a gesture of despair.

But sighs and hoarse stertorous breathing reached their ears from without. Matho drew the cloth aside, and the sight of the soldiers reminded him of another disaster, in the same place. He ground his teeth.

"Villain! Once before . . . ."

Spendius interrupted him. "You were not there *then*, either."

"There is a curse in it!" cried Matho. "But, sooner or later, I shall overtake him! I will conquer him—kill him! Ah, if I had been there! . . ." It was the thought of having missed the battle that maddened him, still more than the defeat. He tore off his sword and flung it on the ground. "But how did the Carthaginians come to beat you?"

## The Battle of the Macar

The escaped slave began to describe the manœuvres. Matho felt as though he were watching them. He grew exasperated. The army from Utica, instead of running towards the bridge, should have taken Hamilcar in rear.

"As though I did not know that!" said Spendius.

"You ought to have doubled the depth of your ranks, not risked the light-armed troops against the phalanx. You should have given the elephants free passage. The fortunes of the day might have been turned at the last moment; there was no necessity for flight."

"I saw him go by," replied Spendius, "in his great red cloak, with his arms raised, towering above the dust cloud like an eagle flying beside the cohorts; at his every nod they closed up or rushed forward; the crowd swept us towards one another; he looked me in the face. I felt a chill in my heart as though a sword had pierced it."

"Can he, by any chance, have chosen the day?" murmured Matho to himself.

They questioned one another, endeavouring to find out what had led the Suffete to come just at the most unfavourable juncture. They went on to discuss the situation, and either to minimise his fault or to restore his own courage, Spendius declared that there was hope, even yet.

"What if there be none?" said Matho. "I will continue the war, by myself!"

"And so will I!" cried the Greek, leaping up. He strode to and fro, his eyes flashed, and his jackal's face was wrinkled with a peculiar smile.

"We will make a fresh beginning. Do not leave

## Salamambo

me again! I am not fitted for battles in broad daylight; the flash of swords confuses my sight; it is a complaint I suffer from; I have lived too long in the ergastulum. But give me a wall to scale by night—I will penetrate the citadel, and the corpses shall be cold before cock-crow! Point me out some one, some thing—a foe, a treasure, a woman—a woman,” he repeated, “and, were she the daughter of a king, speedily would I bring your desire to your feet. You reproach me with having lost the battle against Hanno: I regained it for all that. My drove of swine did us better service than a phalanx of Spartans; that you must admit.” And, yielding to the desire to magnify himself and to take his revenge, he enumerated all the things he had done for the cause of the Mercenaries. “It was I, in the Suffete’s gardens, who urged on the Gauls! And afterwards, at Sicca, I made them wild with fear of the Republic! Gisco was discharging them, but it did not suit my purpose that the interpreters should speak. Ah, how their tongues lolled from their mouths! Do you remember that? I guided you into Carthage; I stole the zaimph. I brought you into her presence. I will do more yet: you shall see!” He burst into wild laughter.

Matho gazed at him with staring eyes. He experienced a kind of uneasiness in presence of the man, who, coward as he was, was at the same time so terrible.

“*Evoè!*” resumed the Greek in a jovial tone, snapping his fingers. “After the rain, the sun! I have worked in the quarries, and like one of the

## The Battle of the Mācar

Ptolemies have drunk the wine of Mons Massicus from a goblet of my own, beneath a canopy of gold. Adversity should sharpen our wits. By dint of work one may bend Fortune to one's will. She dearly loves the shrewd. She will be ours ! ”

His thoughts returned to Matho, and he took him by the arm.

“ Master, the Carthaginians are now confident of their victory. You have an entire army which has not fought, and your men obey *you*. Place them in front; mine will follow, for the sake of vengeance. I still have three thousand Carians, twelve hundred slingers, and archers as well; whole cohorts! We might even construct a phalanx. Let us go back ! ”

Stunned by the disaster, Matho had not as yet conceived any means of extricating themselves from it. He listened open-mouthed, and the plates of bronze which enclosed his ribs rose with the bounding of his heart. He picked up his sword.

“ Follow me ! ” he cried. “ Let us be off ! ”

But the scouts, on their return, announced that the Carthaginian dead had been removed, that the bridge was in ruins, and Hamilcar nowhere to be seen.

## IX

### IN THE FIELD

**H**E had supposed that the Mercenaries would await him at Utica, or else return against him, and finding his forces insufficient either to deliver an attack or to sustain one, he had plunged into the regions towards the south, following the right bank of the river, and thereby at once placing himself beyond the reach of a surprise.

His intention was to shut his eyes for the present to the revolt of the tribes, and to detach them all from the cause of the Barbarians; then, when the latter should find themselves isolated in the midst of the provinces, he would fall upon and exterminate them.

In the space of a fortnight he pacified the region lying between Thouccaber and Utica, with the towns of Tignicabah, Tessourah, Vacca, and others, which lay to the west. Ambassadors reached him from Zounghar, built among the mountains, from Assouras, famed for its temple; from Djeraado, prolific of juniper trees; from Thapitis and from Hagour. The country-folk came in laden with provisions, implored his protection, kissed his feet and those of his soldiers, and complained of the Barbarians. Some came to offer him sacks containing

## In the Field

the heads of Mercenaries taken, so they said, from those they had killed, but in reality from corpses, for many of the fugitives who had lost themselves were found dead here and there, beneath the olives and among the vines.

On the day following the victory, Hamilcar, in order to dazzle the people, had sent to Carthage the two thousand prisoners taken on the field of battle. They arrived in long bands of a hundred each, all with their hands fastened behind them by means of a bronze bar which caught the backs of their necks, the wounded accompanying them and bleeding as they ran, while behind them rode horsemen who drove them on with whips.

Carthage was in a frenzy of delight! Men kept telling one another that six thousand Barbarians had been slain; the rest would make no further resistance and the war was over. People embraced one another in the streets, and rubbed the faces of the Dii Patæci with butter and cinnamon in token of gratitude. With their great eyes, their big bellies and their arms raised to shoulder height, they seemed to live beneath their fresh paint, and to share in the popular gaiety. The Rich left their doors open, the town echoed with the rumble of the tambourine, the temples were illuminated every night, and the handmaidens of the Goddess came down into Malqua and gave themselves to the populace upon stages of sycamore wood which they set up at the corners of the crossways. Land was voted for the conquerors, sacrifices for Melkarth and three hundred crowns of gold for the Suffete, while his partisahs proposed that new honours and prerogatives should be assigned to him.

## Salamambo

He had urged the Ancients to make overtures to Autharitus for the exchange of the aged Gisco and the other Carthaginians similarly detained, for the whole, if need be, of the Barbarian prisoners. The Libyans and Nomads who constituted the army of Autharitus were barely acquainted with these Mercenaries of Greek or Græco-Italian race, and since the Republic offered them so many Barbarians against so few Carthaginians, the latter must be of considerable value and the former of none. They feared a snare, and Autharitus refused.

Then the Ancients ordained the execution of the prisoners, although the Suffete had written requesting that they should not be put to death. He looked forward to incorporating the best of them with his own troops, and thereby exciting defection. But hatred carried all caution before it.

The two thousand Barbarians were fastened to the tombstones among the Mappalia, and tradesmen, low kitchen-boys, embroiderers, women even—the widows of the dead, with their children—all who chose, came to kill them with bows and arrows. They took their aim slowly in order to prolong their torture; by turns they lowered their weapons, and then raised them, while the multitude hustled one another and shouted. Paralytics had themselves brought upon litters; many had the forethought to carry food with them and stayed until the evening; others remained there all night long. Drinking went on in tents set up for the purpose, and many made large sums by letting bows on hire.

Then they left all the crucified corpses where they stood, like so many red statues against the tombs,

## In the Field

and the frenzy spread even to the inhabitants of Malqua, the descendants of families indigenous to the soil and usually indifferent to the concerns of the nation. Out of gratitude for the pleasures she was giving them they now became interested in her fortunes, and acquired a consciousness of Punic nationality, so that the Ancients thought they had done a clever thing in thus welding the entire population together in a common vengeance.

Nor was the sanction of the Gods wanting, for from every quarter of the sky the ravens swooped down, circling in the air with loud, harsh cries, forming a huge cloud which constantly revolved upon itself, and was visible from Clypea, from Rhades, and from Cape Hermæum. Sometimes it parted suddenly, its black spirals growing ever broader as they receded; an eagle had plunged into the midst and again flown off. Here and there, upon dome and terrace, on the summits of obelisks and the pediments of temples huge birds were perched, with shreds of human flesh in their crimsoned beaks.

On account of the odour, the Carthaginians reluctantly untied the corpses. Some they burnt; others were thrown into the sea, and the waves, driven by the north wind, cast them upon the shore, at the extremity of the gulf, in front of Autharitus' camp.

Doubtless the Barbarians were terrified by this punishment, for from the summit of the temple of Eschmoun they were seen to strike their tents, gather their flocks together, and load their baggage on the backs of donkeys; and during the evening of the same day the entire army took its departure.



## Salamambo

Its business was, by marching to and fro between the mountain of the Hot-Springs and Hippo-Zarytus to cut the Suffete off alike from all approach to the Tyrian towns, and from all possibility of returning to Carthage.

Meanwhile the two other armies were endeavouring to overtake him in the south, Spendius to the east, and Matho on the west, in such a manner that all three might join forces in order to surprise and surround him. Then an unhoped-for reinforcement reached them; Narr' Havas appeared once more, and brought with him three hundred camels loaded with bitumen, twenty-five elephants and six thousand horsemen.

The Suffete, in order to weaken the Mercenaries, had judged it prudent to keep him occupied at a distance, in his own kingdom. From the seclusion of Carthage he had come to an understanding with Masgaba, a Gætulian brigand, who was seeking to establish an empire of his own. Fortified with Punic money, this adventurer had raised a revolt among the Numidian states by promises of freedom. But Narr' Havas, warned by his foster-brother, had swooped down upon Cirta, poisoned the victorious party by means of the water in the cisterns, struck off a few heads, and put everything once more in order, so that on his arrival to attack the Suffete he was more furious even than the Barbarians themselves.

The leaders of the four armies came to an agreement with one another concerning the dispositions of the war. It would be long, and all possibilities must be provided for.

## In the Field

It was decided in the first place to ask the assistance of the Romans, and this mission was offered to Spendius; but as an escaped prisoner he dared not undertake it. Twelve men from the Greek colonies embarked at Annaba on a sloop belonging to the Numidians. Then the chiefs exacted an oath of implicit obedience from all the Barbarians. The captains made a daily inspection of clothes and shoes; the sentries were even forbidden to carry shields, since they often pitched them upon their lances and fell asleep where they stood; those encumbered by draught baggage of any sort were compelled to get rid of it, and everything was to be carried, in the Roman fashion, on the back. As a precaution against the elephants, Matho formed a troop of mail-clad cavalry, both man and horse being concealed beneath a cuirass of hippopotamus hide bristling with nails; while shoes of plaited esparto-grass were made for the horses, in order to protect their hoofs.

The pillage of market-towns and oppressive treatment of such inhabitants as were not of Punic race was forbidden. But as the country was becoming exhausted Matho gave orders that provisions should be distributed according to the number of soldiers, without taking the women into account. At first the men shared with them, and many grew feeble for lack of nourishment. It was a constant cause of quarrelling and abuse, since several enticed the consorts of others by the lure or even the promise of their own portions. Matho commanded that all, without mercy, should be driven away. They took refuge in the camp of Autharit; but such were

## Salamambo

the insults put upon them by the Gauls and Libyans that they were compelled to go elsewhere.

Finally they arrived beneath the walls of Carthage, craving the protection of Ceres and Proserpina, for in Byrsa there was a temple, which, with its priests, had been consecrated to those goddesses, in expiation of the horrors formerly committed at the siege of Syracuse.

The Syssitia, asserting their right to waifs and strays, laid claim to the youngest in order to sell them; while some of the Lacedæmonian women, being of fair complexion, were taken in marriage by New Carthaginians.

Some persisted in following the armies, running beside the captains on the flanks of the syntagmata. They called to their consorts, they pulled their cloaks, they cursed them, beating their own breasts, and holding out their naked and weeping babes at arm's-length. The feelings of the Barbarians were touched by this spectacle, and the women became a source of embarrassment and danger. Repeatedly driven away, they as often returned, and Matho directed the horsemen of Narr' Havas to charge them with the lance. When the Balearians shouted to him that they must have women, "I have none!" he replied.

At this time the spirit of Moloch was taking possession of him, and undeterred by the revolt of his conscience he performed horrible deeds, in the belief that he was obeying the voice of a God. When he could not lay waste the fields he threw stones into them in order to render them barren.

He repeatedly sent messages to Autharitus and

## In the Field

Spendius, urging them to make haste. But the operations of the Suffete were incomprehensible. He encamped in succession at Eidous, at Monchar, and at Tehent; scouts thought they had caught sight of him in the neighbourhood of Ischiil, near the frontiers of Narr' Havas, and it was ascertained that he had crossed the river above Tebourba, with the apparent object of returning to Carthage. Scarcely had he reached one place before he betook himself elsewhere.\* The routes he followed always remained unknown. The Suffete maintained his advantage, without giving battle, and appeared to be leading the Barbarians, while in truth they were pursuing him.

These marches and counter-marches exhausted the Carthaginians still further, and Hamilcar's forces, which received no reinforcements, diminished every day. The country-folk were now less prompt in bringing him provisions. Everywhere he encountered hesitation and silent ill-will, and despite the earnest entreaties he addressed to the Great Council no help was forthcoming from Carthage.\*

It was said, and possibly believed, that he needed none. It was some stratagem, or else he was making unnecessary complaints, and Hanno's partisans exaggerated the importance of Hamilcar's victory in order to injure him. Nobody grudged him the troops which he commanded, but he was not going to have all his demands constantly fulfilled in that way. The war was quite burdensome enough; it had cost too much. Pride, moreover, prevented the patricians of his own party from according him more than a mild support.

## Salamambo

Then, having no further hopes from the Republic, Hamilcar took by force from the tribes all that he needed for the war: grain, oil, wood, cattle, and men. But the inhabitants promptly took to flight. The country towns he passed through were empty; the huts were searched, but nothing was found in them, and the Punic army was soon enveloped by a frightful solitude.

In their rage the Carthaginians began to plunder the provinces; they filled up the cisterns and burnt the houses. The sparks, carried by the wind, were scattered far and wide; whole forests were consumed upon the mountains, encircling the valleys with a crown of fire, and before they could pass them the troops were compelled to wait. Then they resumed their march on the hot ashes, while the sun was at its height.

At times they would see something glitter in a bush beside the road, like the eyes of a tiger-cat. It was a Barbarian, squatting on his heels, and smeared with dust that he might be indistinguishable from the herbage. Or else, when they were passing through a ravine, those upon the wings would suddenly hear the clatter of falling stones, and raising their eyes, would discern a man, bare-footed, bounding along through the opening of the gorge.

Utica and Hippo-Zarytus, however, were now free, since the Mercenaries no longer besieged them. Hamilcar commanded them to come to his assistance. But they were afraid of compromising themselves, and replied in vague terms, with compliments and excuses. He returned abruptly into the north,

## In the Field

determined to effect an entrance into one of the Tyrian towns, even at the cost of laying siege to it. A point upon the coast, whence he might obtain men and provisions from Cyrene or the islands, was essential to him, and he hankered after the port of Utica as being the nearer to Carthage.

Accordingly the Suffete set out from Zouitin and marched cautiously round the lake of Hippo-Zarytus. Soon, however, he was obliged to extend his regiments in columns in order to climb the mountain which separates the two valleys. At sunset they were descending into its hollow, funnel-shaped summit when they perceived in front of them, on a level with the ground, and scurrying apparently over the grass, she-wolves of the colour of bronze.

Suddenly great plumes arose, and an awe-inspiring chant burst forth to the rhythm of flutes. It was the army of Spendius, for in their detestation of Carthage some of the Greeks and Campanians had adopted the ensigns of Rome. At the same time long pikes became visible on the left, together with shields of leopard's skin, cuirasses of flax and bare shoulders. Matho's Iberians these, with the Lusitanians, Balearians and Gætulians; the horses of Narr' Havas could be heard neighing as they ranged themselves round the hill; then came the loqse mob commanded by Autharitus — Gauls, Libyans and Nomads, and among them the Eaters-of-unclear-things, recognisable by the fish-bones in their hair.

Thus, by precisely concerted marches, the Barbarians had rejoined forces. But being themselves

## Salamambo

taken by surprise they halted for several minutes and held a consultation.

The Suffete had massed his men in circular formation in such manner as to offer an equal resistance at every point. The tall pointed shields were fixed edge to edge in the turf so as to surround the infantry. The Clinabarians remained outside, with the elephants, at intervals, farther off. The Mercenaries were worn out with fatigue; it was better to wait until daylight, and fully assured of victory the Barbarians spent the entire night in eating.

They had kindled great blazing fires which left the Punic army in the shade beneath them, while they themselves were dazzled by them. Hamilcar, like the Romans, had an intrenchment fifteen paces wide dug round his camp, to the depth of ten cubits, while the earth was formed into an inner breastwork, upon which sharp interlacing stakes were planted, and at sunrise the Mercenaries were astounded to perceive all the Carthaginians intrenched as though within a fortress.

Among the tents they recognised Hamilcar, moving about distributing orders. His figure was clad in a brown cuirass cut into little scales, and followed by his horse he stopped now and again, extending his right arm to point towards something. And thereupon many a one recalled similar mornings when, amid the din of the clarions, he would pass slowly before them, and his glance would invigorate them like beakers of wine. Those, on the contrary, who knew not Hamilcar, were mad with joy at holding him in their grasp.

If all, however, were to attack at the same time,

## In the Field

they would injure each other in so limited a space. The Numidians might charge across it, but the Clinabarians, who were protected by breastplates, would overwhelm them; besides, how were they to get past the palisades? As for the elephants, they were not sufficiently well trained.

"You are all cowards!" cried Matho. And with the best of his troops he hurled himself upon the intrenchment. A volley of stones drove them back; for the Suffete had taken possession of the catapults they had abandoned on the bridge.

This failure effected a sudden alteration in the fickle spirit of the Barbarians. The extravagance of their courage disappeared; they wished to conquer, but with as little risk to themselves as possible. According to Spendius they ought carefully to maintain their present position and starve the Punic army out. But the Carthaginians set to work to dig wells, and the elevation they occupied being surrounded by mountains water was discovered.

From above their palisade they discharged arrows, earth, dung, and pebbles stubbed up from the soil, while the six catapults were in constant motion along the length of the terrace.

But the wells would in due course run dry, the provisions would become exhausted, the catapults would be worn out, and the Mercenaries, ten times the more numerous, would triumph in the end. The Suffete devised negotiations in order to gain time, and one morning the Barbarians found within their lines a sheep-skin covered with writing. Hamilcar justified his victory: the Ancients had forced him into the war, and to show them that he kept his



## Salamambo

word he would allow them to sack either Utica or Hippo-Zarytus, which they pleased; in conclusion Hamilcar declared that he was not afraid of them, since he had won over the traitors, and with their assistance would easily dispose of all the rest.

The Barbarians became uneasy: this offer of immediate booty set them pondering; quite unsuspicious of any trap behind the Suffete's boasting they grew apprehensive of treachery among themselves, and began to observe one another with distrust. Words and proceedings were taken note of; they were awakened by alarms at night. Many forsook their companions, each selected the army to which he would belong according to his own caprice, and Autharitus and his Gauls joined the men of Cis-Alpina, whose language they understood.

Every night the four chiefs came together in Matho's tent and crouched around a shield intent on the advance and retreat of the little wooden figures invented by Pyrrhus in order to exhibit the movement of troops. Spendius demonstrated the resources of Hamilcar, entreated them not to endanger their opportunity, and swore by all the Gods. Matho walked irritably up and down gesticulating. The war against Carthage was his own personal concern; it exasperated him that the others should interfere with it unless they were prepared to obey him. Autharitus, reading what he said in his features, applauded him. Narr'Havas raised his chin in contempt; not a step was suggested but it seemed to him fatal, and he no longer smiled. He sighed as though he had crushed down the anguish of a dream he knew to

## In the Field

be impossible, the despair occasioned by an abortive undertaking.

While the Barbarians were endeavouring to make up their minds the Suffete was improving his defences: he dug a second line of intrenchments within the palisades, built a second wall, and erected wooden towers at the angles, while his slaves advanced among the outposts in order to drive caltrops into the ground. But the elephants, which had been put upon short rations, were chafing against their shackles. To spare the fodder he commanded the Clinabarians to slaughter the less robust among the stallions. Some, who refused, he executed. The horses were eaten, and for days afterwards the thought of the fresh meat was a melancholy recollection to the Carthaginians.

From the bottom of the amphitheatre in which they found themselves confined they could see the four camps of the Barbarians full of stir and movement all around them on the heights. Women went their rounds with skins upon their heads, goats wandered, bleating, beneath the stacks of pikes, sentinels were relieved, and meals were eaten around the trivets. The tribes, in fact, furnished them with provisions in abundance, and the Mercenaries had no suspicion of the alarm their inaction occasioned in the Punic army.

On the second day the Carthaginians had observed in the camp of the nomads a body of three hundred men set apart from the others. These were their fellow-citizens, the Rich, who had been kept as prisoners ever since the beginning of the war. Some of the Libyans arranged them all on the

## Salamambo

brink of the intrenchment and hurled javelins from behind them, using their bodies as a defence. The unhappy creatures were barely recognisable, so completely were their faces concealed by filth and vermin. Their hair, torn out in places, revealed the ulcers on their heads, and so gaunt were they and ghastly that they resembled mummies wrapped in cerements of rags. Some, trembling, sobbed with a stupid air; others shouted to their friends that they should aim at the Barbarians. Among them was one with bent head who neither moved nor spoke; his great white beard came down even to his chain-laden hands, and the Carthaginians, with a feeling in their hearts as though the Republic had fallen, recognised Gisco. The position was dangerous, but they crowded together to see him. Upon his head had been placed a grotesque tiara of hippopotamus hide inlaid with pebbles. It was a fancy of Autharitus, but to Matho it gave offence.

Hamilcar, in a fury, had the palisades opened, being determined to force his way out, no matter how, and the Carthaginians went at a furious rate three hundred paces, or half-way, up the hill. Such a flood of Barbarians came down upon them that they were driven back upon their own lines. One of the guards of the Legion, left outside, tripped among the stones, and Zarxas, running up, struck him down, and plunged a dagger into his throat; then, drawing it out, flung himself upon the wound, glued his mouth to it, and with snarls of delight and sudden tremors which shook him from head to heel sucked in the blood in one deep draught.

## In the Field

Then he placidly seated himself upon the corpse, and with neck thrown back raised his face aloft the better to breathe the air, like a hind which has just quenched its thirst from a mountain stream, and raised his shrill voice in a Barbarian song, a vague melody full of protracted modulations, which broke in upon and alternated with one another like echo answering to echo among the mountains. He called upon his brothers and summoned them to a feast ; then dropped his hands between his legs, slowly bowed his head and wept. This atrocious deed horrified the Barbarians, and more particularly the Greeks.

From that time onwards the Carthaginians made no attempt at a sortie, nor did they think of surrender, being certain that they would perish in tortures.

Provisions however, with all Hamilcar's care, diminished to an alarming extent. For each man there were left but ten k'hommers of corn, three hins of millet and twelve betzas of dried fruit. There was no more meat, no more oil, no more salt food ; there was not a grain of barley for the horses, and you could see them bending their emaciated necks to find a few stalks of trampled straw in the dust. Often the mounted sentries on the earthwork would perceive by moonlight one of the Barbarians' dogs scavenging among the rubbish heaps in the intrenchment below ; they would knock it over with a stone, climb the palisades with the help of their shield straps, and then eat it without telling anyone. Sometimes a horrible barking broke out and the man did not return. In the fourth company of the twelfth

## Salamambo

syntagma three soldiers of the phalanx stabbed one another to death in a dispute about a rat.

They all regretted their families and homes ; the poor their hive-shaped huts, with shells upon the threshold, and nets hung up to dry ; the patricians their great halls full of blue obscurity, when at the most languid hour of the day they took their repose listening to the vague sound of the streets mingled with the murmur of the leaves which rustled in their gardens, and the better to realise and enjoy this thought they would close their eyelids, to be awakened by the shock of a wound. Every minute there was some engagement, some fresh alarm ; the towers were on fire, the Eaters-of-unclean things were leaping at the palisades, and when their hands were chopped off with axes others would run up, while a rain of iron came down upon the tents. The Carthaginians erected covered passage ways of interwoven reeds, in order to protect themselves from the projectiles, and shutting themselves therein no longer stirred beyond them.

Daily, as it circled about the hill, the sun forsook the bottom of the gorge in the early hours of the afternoon, and left the Punic army in shadow. In front and behind them rose grey slopes covered with pebbles sparsely spotted with lichen, while above their heads the sky displayed its unfailing purity, more polished and cold to the eye than a metal dome. So indignant was Hamilcar with Carthage that he was tempted to cast in his lot with the Barbarians and lead them against her. And then, forsooth, the porters, sutlers and slaves began to murmur, and neither the people, nor the Great

## In the Field

Council, nor anyone else sent even a gleam of hope. It was above all the idea that it would become worse which rendered the situation intolerable.

At the news of the disaster Carthage had, as it were, bounded with wrath and hatred; the Suffete would have been less abused if he had allowed himself to be worsted at the outset.

But for the purchase of other Mercenaries, there was neither time nor money. And even if soldiers could be raised within the city how could they be equipped? Hamilcar had taken all the arms! Then who would command them? The best captains were in camp with him! Meanwhile, men despatched by the Suffete were arriving in the streets and complaining aloud. This became a matter of anxiety to the Great Council, who made arrangements for putting them out of the way.

The precaution was needless; everyone accused Barca of having acted too leniently. He should have followed up his victory by annihilating the Mercenaries. Why had he plundered the tribes? Carthage had made pretty heavy sacrifices, too! The patricians lamented their contribution of fourteen shekels, the Syssitia theirs of two hundred and twenty-three thousand kikars of gold; those who had given nothing bewailed themselves like the rest. The populace were jealous of the New Carthaginians, to whom Hamilcar had promised the rights of full citizenship, while even the Ligurians, who had fought with such courage, were confused with the Barbarians and cursed with no less fervour; their race was accounted to them as a crime and

## Salamambo

an evidence of complicity. Tradesmen standing in the doorways of their shops, workmen passing by with leaden rule in hand, brine-sellers washing out their panniers, attendants in the vapour-baths, sellers of hot drinks—all discussed the operations of the campaign. They would trace plans of battle in the dust with their fingers, and of all the idle scamps in the city there was none so insignificant but he could correct the errors of Hamilcar.

According to the priests it was a judgment upon his long impiety. He had never offered sacrifices, had been unable to purify his troops, had even refused to be accompanied by augurs; and the offence given by his sacrilegious behaviour augmented the violence of hatred hitherto kept within bounds, the rage caused by hopes betrayed. The Sicilian disasters were called to mind, and all the long-endured burden of his pride. The colleges of priests did not forgive the seizure of their treasure, and they exacted from the Great Council a pledge that if ever he returned he should be crucified.

The weather during the month of Eloul, which that year was excessively hot, was an additional calamity. Nauseous odours arose from the borders of the lake, and mingled in the air with the fumes which arose in clouds from the aromatics burning at the corners of the streets. The sound of hymns was constantly to be heard. Throngs of people occupied the steps of the temples, every wall was covered with black veils; tapers burned upon the brows of the *Dii Pataci*, and the blood of the sacrificed camels streamed from top to bottom of each slight, forming a red cascade from stair to

## In the Field

stair. Carthage was in the throes of a lurid frenzy. From the depths of the narrowest alleys, out of the darkest kennels, there emerged pale faces, men with the profile of a viper, grinding their teeth. The houses were filled with the shrill lamentations of women, which found their way through the gratings, and made those who stood chatting in the squares turn to look. Sometimes it was thought the Barbarians were at hand ; they had been sighted behind the mountain of the Hot Springs ; they were encamped at Tunis ; and the voices multiplied, grew louder, and became fused in a general uproar. Then universal silence would assert itself, some, holding their hands above their eyes, remained clinging to the pediments of the buildings upon which they had climbed, while others lay prone at the foot of the ramparts and strained their ears. The spasm of terror once over, their petulant fury again broke forth.

But the conviction of their impotence soon plunged them once more in the same dejection, which returned every evening with twofold force when all went up to the terraces and, with an obeisance nine times repeated, uttered a mighty shout to salute the sun. Slowly he sank behind the lagoon, then suddenly vanished among the mountains in the direction of the Barbarians' camp.

They were awaiting the thrice holy festival when from the summit of a pyre an eagle took its flight towards heaven : a symbol of the resurrection of the year, a message from the people to their supreme Baal, and by them regarded as a sort of union, a link, as it were, between themselves and the might



## Salamambo

of the Sun. Now, moreover, that their hearts were full of hatred they turned in their simplicity towards Moloch the Manslayer, and all forsook Tanit. Deprived of her veil, Rabbetna, in truth, was as it were shorn of some part of her virtue. She withheld her beneficent showers, she had abandoned Carthage; she was a deserter, an enemy. Some cast stones at her in order to insult her. But many pitied, even while they abused her; she was still—perhaps more deeply—beloved.

Thus all their misfortunes were due to the loss of the zaimph. In that Salamambo had indirectly borne a part; the same ill-will was extended to her; she ought to be made to suffer. Soon a vague notion of immolation gained currency among the people. If the Baalim were to be appeased it was doubtless necessary that something of inestimable value should be offered up to them, some creature at once beautiful, young, pure, of ancient lineage, a descendant of the Gods, a star amongst men. The gardens of Megara were daily invaded by men whom no one knew; the slaves, fearing for themselves, did not dare to resist them. Nevertheless they did not advance beyond the staircase of the galleys. They remained below, with their eyes fixed upon the topmost terrace, awaiting Salamambo; and for hours they shouted against her, like dogs that bry the moon.

..

## X

### THE SERPENT

THESE popular clamours had no terrors for the daughter of Hamilcar.

She was a prey to anxiety of a more exalted nature: her great serpent, the black Python, was pining, and for Carthaginians the serpent was not only the national but a private fetish. It was supposed to be the offspring of the dust of the earth, since it emerges from its depths and requires no feet to traverse it; its manner of progression suggested the undulation of rivers, its temperature the viscous gloom which had been from of old and teemed with fertility, and the circle it described when biting its tail the entire system of the planets, the intelligence of Eschmoun.

The serpent of Salamambo had already several times refused the four live sparrows which were offered to it at full moon and whenever the moon was new. Its beautiful skin, strewn like the heavens with spots of gold on a dark background, was now yellow, flabby, wrinkled and too large for its body; its head was covered with a downy mould, and little red-specks which seemed to move could be detected in the corners of its eyelids. From time to time Salamambo approached its basket of silver wire, and

## Salamambo

thrust aside the curtain of purple, the lotus leaves and the birds' down ; it was ever coiled upon itself, more motionless than a withered creeper ; and at last, by dint of watching it, she came to feel a spiral, as it were, within her heart, rising gradually to her throat and strangling her.

With all her despair at having set eyes upon the zäimph, she nevertheless felt therein a kind of joy, an inward pride. A mystery was concealed in the lustre of its folds ; it was the mist that enshrouded the Gods, the secret of universal existence, and Salamambo, while horrified at her own thought, regretted that she had not raised it.

Almost always she remained huddled in one corner of her chamber, her left knee bent and clasped within her hands, her lips parted, her chin depressed, her eyes fixed. With terror she recalled the countenance of her father ; she longed to go away into the mountains of Phœnicia, on a pilgrimage to the temple of Aphaka, where Tanit had descended to earth in the form of a star ; fancies of every kind attracted and at the same time alarmed her ; day by day, moreover, her isolation grew more complete. She did not even know what had become of Hamilcar.

Wearied of her thoughts, she rose at last, and trailing her little sandals so that their soles tapped at every step against her heels, she wandered at random about the great silent chamber. Amethyst and topaz, set in the ceiling here and there, made trembling points of light, and Salamambo slightly turned her head to see them as she walked. She approached the hanging amphoræ and took them

## The Serpent

by the neck, cooled her bosom beneath the broad fans, or amused herself by burning cinnamon in hollow pearls. At sunset Taanach withdrew the diamond-shaped pieces of black felt which closed the openings in the wall, when forthwith in came her doves, anointed with musk like the doves of Tanit, and their pink feet glided over the pavement of glass among the grains of barley which she threw down for them in lavish handfuls, like a sower in a field. But suddenly she burst into sobs; then, with staring eyes, pale as a corpse, insensible and cold, she lay motionless upon the great bed of ox-hide thongs, repeating ever one and the same word; yet all the while she heard the monkeys calling in the tops of the palm trees and the ceaseless grinding of the great wheel which raised a stream of pure water from story to story to fill the porphyry basin.

At times for several days she would refuse to eat. In fancy she would see dim stars passing beneath her feet. She would call Schahabarim, and when he came, had nothing to tell him.

Without the relief of his presence she could not live. But at heart she rebelled against his domination; the priest inspired her at once with terror, jealousy, hatred, and a kind of love born of gratitude for the strange, sensuous charm she experienced in his presence.

Skilled to distinguish the Gods by whom diseases were sent he had detected the influence of Rabbet, and to cure Salammbo he had her apartment sprinkled with lotions of vervain and maiden's hair; she ate mandrakes every morning; she slept with her head upon a sachet of aromatics mixed by the

## Salamambo

pontiffs ; he had even made use of baaras, a flame-coloured root which drives evil spirits back to the north ; and at last, facing the pole-star, he murmured thrice the mysterious name of Tanit ; but Salamambo was still ailing, her sufferings grew more acute.

None at Carthage was so learned as he. In his youth he had studied at the college of the Mogbeds, at Borsippa, near Babylon ; then he had visited Samothrace, Pessinus, Ephesus, Thessaly, Judæa, the temples of the Nabathæi, lost in the sands, and had followed the banks of the Nile on foot from the cataracts to the sea. With veiled face and waving torches he had cast a black cock upon a fire of sandarac before the breast of the sphinx, the Father of Terror. He had gone down into the caverns of Proserpine, had watched the revolution of the five hundred columns in the labyrinth of Lemnos, had seen the blaze of light from the candelabrum of Tarentum, which bore upon its stem as many sconces as there are days in the year, and at times, by night, gave audience to Greeks whom he desired to question. He was no less interested in the constitution of the world than in the nature of the Gods ; he had observed the equinoxes by means of the armils in the portico of Alexandria, and in company with the bematists of Evergetes, who measure the heavens by calculating the number of their steps, had paid a visit to Cyrene ; whence it came about that there was now growing up within his thought a religion peculiar to himself, without any definite forms, and for that very reason abounding in accesses of exaltation and of fervour. He no longer believed the earth to be fashioned like

## The Serpent

a fir-cone ; he believed it to be round, and to be for ever falling through infinite space at a rate so tremendous that its descent was not perceived.

From the position of the sun, above the moon, he argued to the supremacy of Baal, of whom the orb is but the countenance and the reflection ; all his observations, moreover, of things terrestrial compelled him to recognise the predominance of the male and destroying principle. Again, it was Rabbet to whom he inwardly attributed the misfortune of his life. Was it not for her sake that the supreme pontiff, stepping forward amid the clamour of cymbals, had formerly deprived him of his manhood in a bowl of scalding water ? And with melancholy glance his eye would follow the men who accompanied by the priestesses sought the seclusion of the terebinths.

His days were occupied with the inspection of censers, vases of gold, tongs, rakes for the ashes on the altar, and all the garments of the statues, down to the bronze needle used for curling the hair, of an ancient image of Tanit in the third of the small temples near the emerald vine. At the same hours each day he raised before the same doors the great hangings which fell back again behind him, remained with arms outstretched in the same attitude, and, prostrate upon the same flag-stones, engaged in prayer, while all about him a populace of priests, moved barefoot through corridors dim with eternal twilight.

But Salammbo, amid the barrenness of his life, was like a flower in the crevice of a sepulchre. Yet was he austere towards her, sparing her neither

## Salamambo

penance nor bitter words. His condition established between them something of the equality due to community of sex, and his grievance against her was not so much that she could never be his as that she should be so beautiful and, above all, so pure. Often he could see plainly that she was toiling to follow his thought. Then he would turn sadly away, feeling himself more than ever forsaken, lonely and empty-hearted.

At times strange words would escape him, words which passed before Salamambo like broad flashes illuminating the depths of an abyss. It was by night that this would happen, when they watched the stars alone together upon the terrace, while Carthage lay spread beneath their feet, with the gulf and the open sea fading dimly into the hue of the darkness.

He expounded for her the theory that souls descend to earth by following the path of the sun through the signs of the zodiac. Stretching forth his arm he pointed out the gate of human generation in Aries, and in Capricornus the door of return towards the Gods; and Salamambo strove to perceive them, for she took these conceptions for realities: she accepted as true in themselves what were pure symbols or even mere fashions of speech, a distinction not always quite clear to the priest himself.

"The souls of the dead," said he, "are decomposed in the moon, just as their bodies are decomposed in the earth. Its moisture is derived from their tears; it is a gloomy abode, full of mire, wreckage and tempests."

## The Serpent

She inquired what would happen to her there.

"First of all you will pine away, becoming light as a vapour hovering above the waves; and, after more protracted trials and sufferings, will pass onwards to the furnace of the sun, the very source of Intelligence."

Of Rabbot, however, he did not speak. Salammbo supposed that it was from shame for his conquered goddess, and calling her by a common name for the moon she broke forth in blessings on the gentle, fertile planet.

"No, no!" he exclaimed at length. "She derives all her fertility from the other. Do you not see how she wanders about him like a love-sick woman openly pursuing her lover?" And he never ceased to extol the virtue of light.

Far from discouraging her mystic desires, on the contrary he stimulated them, and seemed even to take a delight in harrowing her by revelations of a relentless creed. Salammbo, despite the pangs of her love, seized upon them with passion.

But the more doubtful he felt with regard to Tanif the more Schahabarim longed to believe in her. At the bottom of his heart he was checked by a feeling of remorse. He required some proof, some manifestation of the Gods, and in the hope of obtaining it the priest conceived an enterprise which might save his country and at the same time his belief.

Thenceforth he made it his business to lament, in Salammbo's presence, alike the sacrilege and its resultant evils, which extended even to the celestial sphere. Then he abruptly informed her of the peril in which the Suffete stood, assailed as he was by



## Salamambo

three armies commanded by Matho ; for Matho, in the eyes of the Carthaginians, was the king, so to speak, of the Barbarians, on account of the veil ; and he added that the safety both of the Republic and of her father depended upon her alone.

" On me ! " she cried. " How can I — ? "

But the priest gave a scornful smile.

" You will never consent ! " he said.

She beseeched him, and at last Schahabarim spoke.

" You must visit the camp of the Barbarians and recover the zaïmph ! "

She sank down upon the ebony stool, and sat with arms lying between her knees, trembling in every limb, like a victim crouching at the altar's foot in expectation of the blow which shall produce insensibility. There was a humming in her temples, circles of fire revolved before her eyes ; and the one thing that stood out clearly in her stupefied consciousness was the certainty that she was shortly to die.

But if Rabbetna should triumph, thought Schahabarim, if the zaïmph were restored and Carthage delivered, what mattered the life of a woman ! Besides it was possible that she might obtain the veil and not perish after all.

Three days passed without his coming again ; in the evening of the fourth day she sent for him.

To arouse her feelings the more thoroughly he reported to her the shouts of abuse which were levelled at Hamilcar in open Council, he told her that she had sinned, that she ought to retrieve her crime, and that the sacrifice was ordained by Rabbetna.

Often a great uproar would make its way across

## The Serpent

the Mapyalia and reach the ears in Megara. Schahabarim and Salammbo would hasten outside and look forth from the top of the staircase of the galleys.

It arose from people in the square of Khamon shouting for arms. The Ancients, holding the proposed attempt to be futile, refused to supply them, other detachments, without a general, having been cut to pieces. At last they were allowed to go, and either out of a sort of reverence for Moloch, or from a vague craving for destruction they tore up some of the great cypresses in the groves of the temples and lighting them at the torches of the Kabiri carried them through the streets with singing. On came the monstrous flames, swaying slowly to and fro, casting gleams of light upon the balls of glass on the summits of the temples, on the ornaments of colossal statues and on the beaks of ships, rising above the roofs, and wandering through the city like rolling suns. They descended the Acropolis and the gate of Malqua opened.

"Are you ready?" cried Schahabarim. "Or have you charged them to tell your father that you have forsaken him?" She hid her face within her draperies, and the great lights grew more and more distant as they gradually descended to the margin of the sea.

An undefined terror held her back; she was afraid of Moloch, afraid of Matho. With his giant's stature and his possession of the zaimph the man was master of Rabbetna as well as of Baal, and appeared to her vision girt with the same lightnings as they; the souls of the Gods, moreover, visited at times the forms of men. Did not Schahabarim,

## Salamambo

speaking of Matho, say that she was to conquer Moloch? They were blended one with the other; she confused them together, and was haunted by both.

Anxious to know the future she approached the serpent, for auguries were drawn from the positions these animals assumed. But the basket was empty, and Salamambo became anxious.

She found him with his tail wound about one of the silver balusters, near the hanging couch, and rubbing it in order to get rid of his old yellow-tinted skin, while his bright, shining body was extended like a sword half out of its sheath.

Then, during the succeeding days, as she allowed herself to be convinced, and grew more disposed to go to the assistance of Tanit, the Python recovered and increased in size; he seemed to gain new life.

Thereupon the certainty that Schahabarim was giving utterance to the will of the Gods took firm hold of her consciousness. One morning she awoke with her mind made up, and inquired what must be done to induce Matho to restore the veil.

"Demand it of him," said Schahabarim.

"But if he should refuse?" she went on.

The priest looked her steadily in the face with a smile she had never seen before.

"Well, what am I to do then?" repeated Salamambo.

He rolled between his fingers the ends of the narrow bands which fell from his tiara to his shoulders, standing motionless, with downcast eyes. At last, seeing that she did not understand—

"You will be alone with him," he said,

## The Serpent

"Well?" said she.

"Alone in his tent."

"And then?"

Schahabarim bit his lips. He was seeking some evasive phrase.

"If you are destined to die, it will be later," he said; "later! Have no fear! And whatever he essays, do not call out, do not be alarmed! You must be humble, you understand, and subservient to his will, which is the command of heaven."

"But the veil?"

"The Gods will take care of that," replied Schahabarim.

"Could not you accompany me, my father?" she continued.

"No!"

He made her kneel down, and with left hand raised and right extended, he swore on her behalf that she would bring the mantle of Tanit back to Carthage. With terrible imprecations she dedicated herself to the Gods, half swooning as she repeated after Schahabarim each word that he uttered.

He informed her as to the fasts and purifications she would have to undergo, and as to how she might gain admission to Matho's presence. Besides, she would be accompanied by a man familiar with the roads.

She felt as though she had found deliverance. She could think of nothing but the joy of once more beholding the zaimph, and now blessed Schahabarim for his exhortations.

It was the season when the doves of Carthage

## Salamambo

migrated to Mount Eryx in Sicily—the neighbourhood of the temple of Venus. For several days before their departure they were seeking and calling to one another in order to gather themselves together; at last, one evening, they took flight, and the wind swept them onward in a large, white cloud, which sailed through the heavens at a great height above the sea.

A blood-coloured radiance dyed the horizon. Gradually, as it seemed, the doves sank nearer and nearer to the waves; then they vanished, swallowed up within the jaws of the sun as though they had fallen therein of their own accord. Salamambo, watching them fade in the distance, lowered her head, and Taanach, believing that she understood her grief, said gently —

“But they will come back, Mistress.”

“Yes, I know.”

“And you will see them again.”

“Perhaps!” she said, with a sigh.

She had not confided her resolve to anyone, and to observe the greater discretion in carrying it out she sent Taanach down to the suburb of Kinisdo to buy all the articles she required, instead of asking the stewards for them: vermilion, aromatics, a linen girdle, and new clothes. The old slave was surprised at these preparations, though she dared not ask any questions, and the day which Schahabarim had fixed for her departure arrived.

About the twelfth hour she perceived in the distance among the sycamores an aged blind man, leaning with one hand upon the shoulder of a child who walked in front of him, while with the other

## The Serpent

he carried beside his hip a kind of cithara made of dark wood. Care had been taken to occupy the eunuchs, the slaves and the women elsewhere; none might know the mystery which was in preparation.

In the corners of the chamber Taanach lighted four tripods full of strobos and cardamom; then she unfolded great pieces of Babylonian tapestry and hung them upon cords all round the chamber, for Salammbo was unwilling that even the walls should behold her. The kinnor-player crouched behind the door, while the lad stood with a reed-flute applied to his lips. The noise of the streets sounded fainter in the distance, purple shadows were lengthening before the colonnades of the temples, and beyond the gulf the roots of the mountains, the fields of olive trees, and the yellow stretches of uncultivated land, rolling away in limitless undulations, were blended together in a bluish haze; not a sound was to be heard, an indescribable prostration hung heavy on the air.

Salammbo stooped down on the onyx step at the edge of the basin, drew back her full sleeves, fastened them behind her shoulders, and entered methodically upon her ablutions according to the sacred rites. When they were over Taanach brought her in an alabaster phial some liquid which had undergone coagulation; it was the blood of a black dog slaughtered by barren women in the ruins of a tomb on a winter's night. With it she rubbed her ears, her heels, and the thumb of her right hand; her nail even retained a tinge of redness, as though she had been squeezing some fruit,

## Salamambo

The moon rose, and cithara and flute began both at once to play.

Salamambo removed her ear-rings, her necklace, her bracelets, and her long white simar; she undid the fillet which restrained her hair, and for some minutes shook her tresses gently out over her shoulders, to cool herself by spreading them abroad. The music outside still went on; it consisted of three hurried, furious notes, always the same; the cords grating, the flute humming. Taanath clapped her hands to mark the rhythm, and Salamambo, with a swaying motion of her whole body, recited prayers, while her garments, one after another, sank to the ground about her.

The heavy tapestry shook and the python's head appeared above the cord which supported it. Slowly the serpent descended like a drop of water running down a wall, crawled between the scattered fabrics, and then, with tail cleaving closely to the ground, rose erect, while its eyes, more brilliant than carbuncles, launched their gleams at Salamambo.

At first, either because she shrank from the cold, or because she was timid, she hesitated. But recalling the orders of Schahabarim she stepped forward; the python lowered itself and, resting the middle of its body upon the nape of her neck, allowed its head and tail to hang down like a broken necklace, with the two ends trailing upon the ground. Salamambo wound it about her body, beneath her arms, and between her knees; then taking hold of its jaw she brought the little triangular maw close to her teeth, and half closing her eyes, sank backwards beneath the rays of the moon. The white

## The Serpent

light seemed to surround her with a silver mist, her moist footprints shone upon the stones of the floor, stars quivered in the depth of the water, and the dark coils with their motley of golden scales, tightened their hold upon her. Salammbo panted beneath the weight; it was too heavy to bear; her limbs began to give way, she felt herself at the point of death, and very gently the serpent tapped her leg with the tip of its tail; then the music ceased and it sank to the ground.

Taanach again drew near, and having prepared two candelabra, with lights burning in crystal spheres full of water, she tinted the palms of Salammbo's hands with lawsonia, put vermilion upon her cheeks and antimony upon the edges of her eyelids, and lengthened her eyebrows with a mixture of gum, musk, ebony, and crushed flies' feet.

Seated in a chair with ivory steps Salammbo resigned herself to the slave's attentions. But the touch of her hands, the scent of the aromatics, and the fasts she had undergone affected her nerves, and she became so pale that Taanach paused.

"Go on!" said Salammbo, and by a great effort of self-control she suddenly recovered her vigour. Then she was seized with a fit of impatience, and urged Taanach to make haste.

"Very well, Mistress! Very well!" grumbled the old slave. ". . . Besides, it is not as though you were keeping anyone waiting!

"I am!" said Salammbo. "There is someone waiting for me!"



## Salamambo

Taanach drew back in surprise, and attempted to elicit further information.

"What are your orders, Mistress? For if you are to remain away . . ."

But Salamambo was sobbing.

"You are in trouble!" cried the slave. "What is the matter? Do not go away! Take me with you! When you were a little child, and used to cry, I took you to my heart and amused you with the nipples of my breasts; it was you, Mistress, who exhausted them!" She struck herself upon her withered bosom. "Now I am old; there is nothing more I can do for you! You do not love me any longer! You hide your troubles from me; you despise your nurse!" And tears of love and vexation streamed down the scars tattooed upon her cheeks.

"No!" said Salamambo. "No; I do love you! Be comforted!"

With a smile like an old monkey's grimace, Taanach resumed her labours. In pursuance of Schahabarim's injunctions Salamambo had instructed her to adorn her superbly, and the slave attired her mistress in barbaric fashion, no less elegant than ingenious.

Over a flimsy under-tunic, the colour of wine, she passed a second, embroidered in a pattern of feathers. Her blue trousers, adorned with silver stars, hung in ample folds from a broad belt of blue scales which fitted her closely about the hips. Next Taanach slipped over her a great robe, of white striped with green, and made of the cloth which comes from the land of the Seres. On the tip of

## The Serpent

her shoulder she fastened a square piece of purple weighted below with beads of sandastrum, and over all these garments she passed a black mantle with a long train. Then she gazed at her mistress, and proud of her work could not help saying—

“You will not be more beautiful on your wedding-day!”

“My wedding-day!” repeated Salammbo. She was musing, with one elbow resting on the ivory chair.

But Taanach set before her a copper mirror so broad and so high that she could see her whole figure within it. Then she rose, and with a light touch of her finger put back a lock of hair which came down too low.

Covered with gold-dust and curled in front, her tresses hung down behind in long ringlets terminated by pearls. The lights from the candelabra brought out the paint upon her cheeks, the gold upon her garments, the whiteness of her skin; such was the abundance of jewels about her waist, upon her hands, and upon her toes, that the mirror flashed back their rays like a sun, and Salammbo, standing beside Taanach, bent forward to see it, and smiled at the glittering display.

Then she walked backwards and forwards, not knowing what to do with the time still left upon her hands.

All at once, the sound of a cock-crow was heard. She quickly pinned a long yellow veil to her hair, passed a scarf about her neck, thrust her feet into a pair of blue leather boots, and said to Taanach—

## Salamambo

"Go and see whether there be not a man with two horses beneath the myrtles."

Almost before Taanach had returned Salamambo was descending the staircase of the galleys.

"Mistress!" cried the nurse.

Salamambo turned round with a finger on her lip to enjoin stillness and discretion.

Taanach stole softly past the figure-heads till she reached the foot of the terrace, and by the light of the moon she could make out in the distance a gigantic shadow walking sideways through the cypress avenue at Salamambo's left hand, a presage of impending death.

Taanach went up again to the chamber, and cast herself upon the ground, tearing her face with her nails, plucking out her hair, and uttering shrill screams at the top of her voice.

Then it occurred to her that she might be heard, and she became silent. With her head between her hands and her face upon the pavement she sobbed beneath her breath.

## XI

### WITHIN THE TENT

**S**ALAMMBO'S guide led her up to and beyond the beacon, towards the catacombs, then down through the long suburb of Molouya, full of steep alleys. The sky was beginning to grow pale. Beams of palm wood, projecting from the walls, sometimes compelled them to lower their heads. The two horses, walking at a foot pace, were inclined to slip, and in this manner they reached the gate of Teveste.

Its heavy doors stood half-open; they passed through, and the gate closed behind them.

They began by skirting the ramparts for a time, and on reaching the Reservoirs directed their steps towards the Tænia, a narrow strip of yellow soil separating the gulf from the lake and extending as far as Rhades.

No one was to be seen either in the neighbourhood of Carthage, on the sea, or in the country. The slate-coloured waves rippled gently, and the light wind, driving their foam hither and thither, flecked them with rifts of white. In spite of all her coverings Salammbo shivered in the cool atmosphere of morning; the motion and the open air rendered her giddy. Then the sun rose, and smote

## Salamambo

the back of her head, so that involuntarily she became somewhat drowsy. The two horses ambled onwards side by side, sinking ankle-deep in the noiseless sand.

When they had passed the mountain of the Hot Springs the soil grew firmer, and they made more rapid progress.

But though it was the season of sowing and tillage the fields, to whatever distance they were visible, were bare as the desert. Here and there heaps of wheat lay scattered about, elsewhere the scorched-up barley was shedding its grains. Villages, with sharply defined but disconnected forms, stood carved in black against the dark horizon.

Here and there a piece of half-burnt wall was standing beside the road. The roofs of the huts were falling in, and fragments of earthenware, shreds of clothes, and all sorts of utensils and articles broken beyond recognition could be discerned in the interior. Frequently some ragged creature would emerge from the ruins, with earth-stained face and flaming eyes, only to take promptly to his heels or to disappear within a hole. Salamambo and her guide made no halt.

• One deserted plain succeeded to another. Wide stretches of light-coloured soil were streaked with long irregular patches of charcoal dust, which rose in clouds behind their steps. At times they would come to a peaceful little spot, where a stream was flowing amid long grass, and as they ascended the opposite bank Salamambo would pluck some moist leaves to cool her hands. At the corner of a grove

## Within the Tent

of oleanders her horse shied at the corpse of a man which was lying on the ground.

The slave immediately settled her again upon the cushions. He was one of the temple attendants, a man whom Schahabarim was accustomed to employ upon dangerous missions.

He now took the extreme precaution of proceeding on foot, close beside her, between the horses. He would lash them with the end of a leather thong which was twisted about his arm, or from a pouch hanging at his breast would take balls made of wheat, dates and the yolks of eggs and wrapped in lotus leaves, offering them to Salammbo as he ran, without a word.

At noon three Barbarians, clothed in skins, crossed their track. Gradually others made their appearance, roaming in bands of ten, twelve, or five-and-twenty men, several of them driving goats, or perhaps a limping cow. Their heavy cudgels bristled with spikes of brass, their hangers glittered against their filthy, savage-looking garments, and they opened their eyes with an amazed yet threatening air. Some, as they passed, tossed them a conventional form of blessing, others ribald jests, and Schahabarim's man replied to each in the language he spoke. He told them that he was conducting an invalid lad to a distant temple in search of a cure.

Meanwhile, the day was declining. A sound of barking reached their ears, and they made their way towards it.

Then, by such light as the dusk afforded, they made out an enclosure of mortarless stone surround-

## Salamambo

ing a building of uncertain character. A dog was running along the wall; the slave pelted it with stones, and they entered a lofty hall with an arched roof.

A woman, crouching in the midst, was warming her hands at a brushwood fire, the smoke from which escaped through the holes in the ceiling. She was half-hidden by her white hair, which came down to her knees; she would not answer questions, but with an idiotic air kept muttering words of vengeance against the Barbarians and Carthaginians.

The runner was prying about to right and to left. Then he came back to her and demanded food. The old woman shook her head, and kept her eyes fixed upon the coals.

"I was the hand," she murmured. "The ten fingers are cut off. The mouth no longer eats."

The slave showed her a handful of gold pieces. She threw herself upon them, but presently resumed her motionless attitude.

At last he placed beneath her throat a dagger which he carried in his belt. Trembling, she approached a large stone, raised it, and brought back a jar of wine with some fish from Hippo-Zarytus preserved in honey.

Salamambo turned away from the uninviting fare, and fell asleep on the trappings of the horses which had been spread in a corner of the room.

Before daylight the man awoke her.

The dog was howling. The slave went quietly up to it and cut off its head with a single stroke of his dagger. Then he rubbed the nostrils of the

## Within the Tent

horses with the blood in order to restore their vigour. The old woman sent a curse after him from behind, and Salammbo, perceiving it, pressed the amulet which she wore against her heart.

They resumed their journey. From time to time she inquired whether they would not shortly reach their destination. The road rose and fell over a succession of low hills; nothing was to be heard save the grating sound made by the grasshoppers; the yellow grass grew hot beneath the sun, and the earth was everywhere cleft by fissures which divided it, as it were, into monstrous paving-stones. Sometimes a viper glided by, sometimes eagles in flight; the slave ran on without stopping; Salammbo mused beneath her veils, and in spite of the heat did not thrust them aside, for fear of soiling her fine garments.

At regular intervals stood towers built by the Carthaginians in order to keep watch over the tribes. They took shelter within them from the heat, and then resumed their journey.

On the previous evening, for prudence' sake, they had made a wide circuit. Now, however, they encountered no one; the district was barren, and the Barbarians had not interfered with it.

But by degrees their ravages began again. Occasionally a piece of tessellated pavement, sole relic of a vanished mansion, lay exposed to view in the midst of a field, and in the distance the leafless olives resembled great thorn bushes. They passed through a town where the houses were burnt to the level of the ground. Human skeletons were visible beside the walls, and there were others as well, those of



## Salamambo

mules and dromedaries. The streets were choked with half-devoured carrion.

Night fell. The lowering sky was covered with clouds. For another two hours they continued to ascend in a westerly direction, then, suddenly, they perceived in front of them a multitude of little flames.

They shone in the hollow of an amphitheatre. Here and there flashed plates of gold, which shifted their positions. These were the breastplates of the Clinabarians: the Punic camp was before them. Then, round about, they made out other and more numerous lights, for the armies of the Mercenaries, now mingled together, covered a large space of ground.

Salamambo made a motion to go forwards. But Schahabarim's servant led her farther away, and they skirted the terrace which enclosed the Barbarian camp. A gap occurred in it, and the slave disappeared.

On the crest of the embankment a sentry was walking up and down with a bow in his hand and a pike upon his shoulder.

Salamambo continued to approach; the Barbarian knelt down, and a long arrow pierced the skirt of her mantle. Then, as she stood still and cried out, he asked her what she wanted.

"To speak with Matho," she replied. "I am a fugitive from Carthage."

He whistled, and the signal was repeated farther and farther off.

Salamambo waited, and her horse, in alarm, kept wheeling round and sniffing the air.

## Within the Tent.

When Matho came up the moon was rising behind her. But she had a yellow veil, with black flowers, over her face, and so many draperies around her person that it was impossible to form any conclusion about her. From the top of the terrace he surveyed the vague form beneath him, which rose up like a phantom in the obscurity of evening.

At last she spoke to him.

"Take me to your tent! I wish it!"

A recollection he could not identify flitted across his memory. He felt his heart beating. Her air of command abashed him.

"Follow me!" he said.

The barrier gave way, and forthwith she was in the Barbarian camp.

It was full of crowds and uproar. Bright fires were burning beneath swinging pots, and their crimson reflections, illuminating certain portions of the camp, left others in utter darkness. Men were shouting and calling to one another; shackled horses formed long straight lines between the tents, which were round or square, and made of leather or cloth; there were also huts of reeds and holes in the sand like those made by dogs. The soldiers were carrying faggots, leaning on their elbows as they lay upon the ground, or preparing for slumber by rolling themselves in mats, and Salamambo's horse, in order to pass over them, sometimes stretched out one leg and jumped.

She remembered having seen them already, but their beards were longer, their faces still darker, their voices more hoarse. Matho, as he walked in front of her, thrust them apart with a movement

## Salamambo

of his arm, which raised his red cloak. Some kissed his hands, others, with cringing salutations, approached him to learn his orders; for now that Spendius, Autharitus and Narr' Havas had lost heart he was the real and only thief of the Barbarians, and had displayed so much boldness and pertinacity that all rendered him obedience.

Salamambo, following in his steps, traversed the entire camp. His tent was at the end of it, three hundred paces from Hamilcar's intrenchment.

On the right she observed a wide ditch, and it seemed to her that there were faces resting upon the edge, on a level with the ground, as though they had been decapitated heads. Yet their eyes moved, and from their parted lips issued lamentations in the Punic tongue.

Two negroes, holding lanterns of resin, stood one on either side of the entrance. Matho pulled the cloth roughly aside, and she followed him.

It was a deep tent, with a pole in the centre, and was lighted from a great sconce shaped like a lotus and full of a yellow oil whereon handfuls of tow were floating. Military accoutrements could be seen shining in the gloom. A naked sword was leaning against a stool near a shield: whips of hippopotamus hide, cymbals, bells, and collars lay scattered in confusion upon baskets of esparto-grass; a self rug was soiled with crumbs of black bread; some copper money lay in a careless heap on a round stone in one corner, and through the rents in the cloth the wind carried in the dust from outside, together with the smell of the elephants, which could be heard eating as they rattled their chains.

## , Within the Tent

"Who are you?" said Matho.

Without replying she looked slowly around her; then her eyes remained fixed upon the farther end of the tent, where something blue and glittering was hanging over a bed of palm branches.

She stepped hastily forward. A cry broke from her. Behind her Matho stamped his foot.

"Who brings you here? Why do you come?"

She pointed to the zaïmph.

"To take it!" she replied, and with the other hand she tore the veils from her head. He drew back, with his elbows behind him, open-mouthed, and almost affrighted.

She felt, as it were, borne up by the strength of the Gods; and looking him in the face demanded the zaïmph—claiming it with proud and fluent words.

Matho did not hear; he was gazing upon her, and for him her garments were blended with her person. The peculiar lustre of the fabrics, like the brilliant whiteness of her skin, was something unique and characteristic of her alone. Her eyes sparkled like her diamonds; her polished nails were but the complement of the elegant jewels that loaded her fingers; the two clasps of her tunic, slightly raising her breasts, brought them closer together, and he became rapt in contemplation of the narrow space between them, wherein hung a thread supporting a plate set with emeralds, visible lower down beneath the violet gauze. For ear-rings she wore two small scales of sapphire, each supporting a hollow pearl full of liquid perfume. Every moment her shoulder was moistened

## Salamambo

by a tiny drop which fell from the holes in the pearl. Matho stood watching it fall.

Ungovernable curiosity carried him onwards ; like a child that raises its hand to an unknown fruit he touched her lightly on the upper part of her bosom with the tip of his finger, trembling as he did so, and the cool skin yielded with an elastic resistance.

The contact, though scarcely sensible, shook Matho to the depths of his nature. An upheaval of his whole being swept him towards her. He would have liked to enfold her, to absorb her, to drink her in. His chest was panting, his teeth chattering.

Taking her by the two wrists he drew her gently to him, and then seated himself upon a cuirass, close to the couch of palm wood which was covered with a lion's skin. She remained standing, and he gazed up at her, holding her thus between his knees.

"How beautiful you are!" he repeated. "How beautiful you are!"

It pained her to find his eyes constantly fixed upon her, and her discomfort and repugnance grew so acute that she restrained herself lest she should scream. Then she thought of Schahabarim, and resigned herself.

• Matho still held her little hands in his ; and from time to time, despite the priest's injunctions, she turned her face aside and thrust out her arms in the endeavour to push him away. He opened his nostrils the better to breathe the fragrance of her person : an exhalation impossible to define, fresh, yet intoxicating as the fumes of a censor. It savoured

## Within the Tent

of honey and pepper, of incense and roses, and of other odours still.

But how did she come to be close beside him, within his tent, and at his mercy? Someone, no doubt, had influenced her. She had not come for the zaïmph? Overcome by a sudden fit of abstraction, he let his arms fall and bent his head.

Salamambo attempted to soften him.

"What have I done to you," she asked, plaintively, "that you should desire my death?"

"Your death!"

"I saw you one evening," she resumed, "by the light of my burning gardens, amid steaming cups and my murdered slaves, and in the fierceness of your wrath you sprang towards me and I was compelled to fly! Then terror took possession of Carthage. Men cried out that towns were being ravaged, estates burnt up, and soldiers massacred; it was you who were the destroyer, you who were the assassin! I hate you! Your very name frets me like remorse! You are more bitterly detested than the plague and the Roman war! The provinces tremble at your fury, the furrows are full of corpses; I have followed the track of your conflagrations as though I were treading in the steps of Moloch!"

Matho sprang to his feet; his heart swelled with a mighty pride; he felt as though he were raised to the stature of a God.

With nostrils working and teeth clenched she went on:

"As though such sacrilege were not enough, while I was asleep you came into my chamber, enveloped in the zaïmph! Your words I did not

## Salamambo

understand; but plainly I saw that you sought to urge me to some horrible deed—to the depths of an abyss.”

“No! no!” cried Matho, wringing his arms. “It was to give it to you; to restore it to you! It seemed to me as though the Goddess had left her robe for you—that it was yours! In her temple or in your house—what does it matter? Are you not all-powerful, spotless, radiant and fair as Tanit?—Unless, perhaps,” he added with a look of boundless adoration, “you yourself are she?”

“I, Tanit!” said Salamambo to herself.

They ceased speaking. Thunder was rolling in the distance. Sheep were bleating, frightened by the storm.

“Ah, come close to me—close!” he resumed.

“Fear nothing!”

“Once I was but a soldier indistinguishable among the common ruck of Mercenaries, so docile that I even carried wood upon my back for the others. What do I care for Carthage! The tossing multitude of her inhabitants is lost for me amid the dust of your sandals, and all her treasures, her provinces, fleets and islands are naught to me beside the freshness of your lips—the turn of your shoulders. But I longed to level her walls with the ground that I might reach you and make you mine! Meanwhile, moreover, I was tasting the sweets of vengeance! Even now I crush men like egg-shells, I hurl myself upon the phalanx, thrust long lances aside with my hands, grip stallions by the nostrils and they come to a halt; a catapult would not kill me! Ah, did you but know how, in the midst of

## Within the Tent

war, my thoughts are of you! Sometimes the remembrance of a gesture, of a fold of your robe, takes sudden hold of me and twines itself about me like a net! In the flame of the phalaric, the gilding of the buckler, I behold your eyes; in the clash of cymbals I hear your voice! I turn me about, you are not there, and once more I plunge into the fight!"

He raised his arms, and the veins upon them crossed one another like ivy on the branches of a tree. Sweat streamed between the massive muscles of his chest; his sides heaved with his breathing, and with them the bronze belt whence a fringe of leathern straps hung down to knees firmer than marble. Salammbo, accustomed to the eunuchs, was dumb with astonishment at the strength of the man. The chastisement of the Goddess, or the influence of Moloch, seemed hovering about her in the presence of the five armies. She was overcome with lassitude; in a kind of stupor she listened to the intermittent call of sentinel answering to sentinel.

The flames of the lamp flickered in the gusts of warm air. For a moment there was a bright gleam, then the darkness grew deeper, and she could see nothing but Matho's eyes, like live coals in the night. She felt, nevertheless, that a fatality was about her, that a supreme, an irrevocable, moment was at hand, and with an effort she went up to the zaimph and raised her hands to take it.

"What are you doing?" exclaimed Matho.

"I am going back to Carthage," she calmly replied.

Folding his arms, he advanced with so terrible an



## Salamambo

air that forthwith she became rooted, as it were, to the spot.

"Going back to Carthage!" he stammered; and, grinding his teeth, repeated, "going back to Carthage! Ah, you came to take the zaïmph, to prevail over me, and then to disappear! No, no! You belong to me, and none, now, shall tear you hence! Oh, I have not forgotten the insolence of your great, calm eyes; the way in which you crushed me with your haughty beauty. 'It is my turn, now! You are my captive, my slave, my handmaid! Call, if you will, your father and his army; the Ancients, the Rich, your hateful nation, to a man! I am the master of three hundred thousand soldiers! I will seek them in Lusitania, in Gaul, in the depths of the desert; I will overthrow your city, I will burn all her temples; her triremes shall float on waves of blood! Not a house, not a stone, not a palm tree shall be left! And if men fail me, I will bring bears from the mountains, and drive lions to the attack! Try to escape, and I kill you!'"

Pale, with clenched fists, he trembled like a harp whose cords are on the point of breaking. Suddenly he was choked with sobs, and sank back upon his haunches.

"Ah, forgive me! I am a wretch; viler than scorpions, fouler than mire and dust! But a moment ago, when you spoke, your breath passed over my face, and I tasted the delight of a dying man who drinks stretched at full length beside a stream. Trample on me, so I but feel your feet! Curse me, if I may but hear your

## Within the Tent

voice! Have pity, and do not go! I love you—I love you!”

He was on his knees, upon the ground, before her; with vagrant hands and head thrown back he twined his arms about her waist; the golden discs which hung from his ears gleamed against the bronze of his neck; tears like globes of silver trembled in his eyes; he sighed, and his sigh was a caress; he murmured vague words, lighter than a zephyr, sweet as a kiss.

There stole over Salammbo a languor in which she lost all consciousness of herself. Something which came at once from within and from above, a command from the Gods, compelled her to yield to it; clouds bore her up, and growing faint she sank back upon the couch amid the hair of the lion's pelt. Matho seized her heels, the little chain of gold snapped asunder, and the two ends as they flew apart smote against the canvas like vipers darting back. The zaimph fell and enfolded her, and bending over her bosom she perceived Matho's face.

“Moloch,” she cried, “thou art burning me!” and the soldier's kisses, more consuming than flames, swept over her; she was carried away, as it were, by a whirlwind, taken captive by the might of the sun.

He kissed each of her fingers, her arms, her feet, and the long tresses of her hair from end to end.

“Carry it off,” he said; “what do I care for it! And with it take me! I forsake the army, I renounce everything! ‘Twenty days’ sail beyond Gades there lies an island covered with gold-dust,

## Salamambo

verdure, and birds. On the mountains, like eternal censers, sway great flowers full of steaming odours; from citron-trees taller than cedars milk-coloured serpents with their diamond-studded jaws cast down the fruit which bestrews the turf, and so balmy is the air that death may be defied. Oh, I will find it, you shall see! We will live in grottoes of crystal, cleft in the roots of the hills. None dwells in that island yet, else will I become its king."

He brushed the dust from his cothurni, insisted on her eating the quarter of a pomegranate, and piled garments behind her head in order to form a cushion. He sought means whereby he might do her service and abase himself, and even spread the zaïmph, like a common rug, over her feet.

"Have you still," he said, "those little gazelle's horns upon which your necklaces are hung? Give them to me; I love them!" For he spoke as though the war were over, laughing with delight; the Mercenaries, Hamilcar, every obstacle, had now disappeared. The moon was sailing between two clouds; they saw it through an opening in the tent.

"Ah! What nights have I spent in watching her!

\* She seemed to me a veil which hid your face; through it you looked at me; the thought of you was mingled with her beams; I no longer knew you apart!" And with his head upon her bosom, he wept freely.

"And this," thought she, "is the terrible man before whom Carthage trembles!"

He fell asleep. Then, disengaging herself from

## Within the Tent

his arm, she set one foot to the ground, and noticed that her little chain was broken.

Maidens belonging to great families were trained to respect these fetters as something of an almost religious character, and Salammbo, blushing, wound the two fragments of the golden chain about her ankles. •

Carthage, Megara, her own house, her room, and the country she had traversed whirled through her memory in a succession of images, tumultuous yet distinct. But between her and them there now intervened a chasm which removed them to an infinite distance.

The storm was passing away; a few scattered drops, tapping one by one, shook the roof of the tent.

Matho, like a drunken man, slept lying at full length upon his side, with one arm hanging over the edge of the couch. His fillet of pearls had slipped upwards a little, leaving his forehead bare. His teeth, parted in a smile, shone amid his black beard, and in his half-closed eyelids there lurked a silent, an almost offensive gaiety.

Salammbo watched him without moving, with downcast head and folded hands.

On a table of cypress wood at the head of the couch lay a dagger, and the sight of its glittering blade kindled within her a thirst for blood. In the distance, doleful voices, long drawn out, besought her through the darkness, like a chorus of spirits. She drew near, and clutched the weapon by the handle. At the touch of her robe Matho's eyes opened slightly; he stretched his lips towards her hands and the dagger fell.

## Salamambo

Cries arose ; a terrible radiance gleamed behind the canvas. Matho lifted it, and they beheld the camp of the Libyans wrapped in flames.

“Their huts of reed were on fire, and the writhing stalks, bursting into flame amid the smoke, shot aloft like arrows ; dark shadows were seen running frantically hither and thither against the red horizon. One could hear the yells of those within the cabins ; elephants, cattle and horses were plunging amid the crowd, trampling it down, together with the ammunition and baggage which were being rescued from the conflagration. Trumpets were sounding, and there were calls for “Matho ! Matho !” Men were at the entrance, wanting to come in.

“Come ! Hamilcar is burning the camp of Autharitus !”

With a bound he was gone. She found herself alone.

Then she examined the zaïmph, and when she had gazed her fill she was surprised that she did not experience the delight she had once anticipated. The fulfilment of her dream left her melancholy.

But the lower edge of the tent was raised, and a shape of horror made its appearance. At first Salamambo could distinguish nothing but a pair of eyes, and a long white beard which swept the earth ; for the rest of the body, encumbered with the rags of some tawny garment, trailed along the ground, while at each forward movement the two hands buried themselves in the beard and then receded. Crawling onwards in this fashion the

## Within the Tent

figure reached her feet, and Salammbo recognised the aged Gisco.

The Mercenaries, in fact, to prevent the captive Ancients from escaping, had broken their legs with a bar of brass; and they lay rotting together in a promiscuous heap amid the filth at the bottom of a pit. At the sound of the porringers the most vigorous among them raised themselves up and called out, and thus it was that Gisco had caught sight of Salammbo. He had guessed her to be a Carthaginian by the little balls of sandastrum which struck against her cothurni, and with a foreboding of some important mystery had succeeded, with the assistance of his comrades, in getting out of the pit; then, with his elbows and hands, he had dragged himself twenty paces further, as far as Matho's tent. Two voices were speaking within, and listening from without he had heard all.

"It is you!" she said at last, almost affrighted.

"Yes, it is I!" he answered, raising himself upon his fists. "I am supposed to be dead, am I not?"

She hung her head, and he resumed, "Ah, why did not the Baals grant me that mercy!" Approaching so near that he touched her, he added, "They would have spared me the pain of cursing you!"

Hastily Salammbo sprang backwards, such was her horror of the filthy creature, hideous as a larva, terrible as a spectre.

"Soon," he said, "I shall be a hundred years old. I have seen Agathocles. I have seen Regulus and the eagles of Rome march through the harvests of the Punic fields. I have seen all the horrors of

## Salamambo

battle; I have seen the sea encumbered with the wreckage of our fleets! Barbarians whom I have commanded have chained me by the four limbs, like a slave guilty of murder. One after the other my comrades die around me; at night I am awakened by the stink of their corpses; I scare away the birds which come to pick out their eyes; yet never, for a single day, have I despaired of Carthage! Had I even seen all the armies of the earth assembled against her, and the flames of her siege soaring above the tops of her temples, still would I have believed in her eternity! Now, however, all is over! The Gods abhor her! Curses upon you who by your shame have hastened her downfall!"

She opened her lips.

"Ah, I was there!" he cried. "I heard you hoarse with love like a harlot; and when he told you of his desire you let him kiss your hands! Even were you carried away by the fierceness of your passion, at least you should have followed the example of the wild beasts who mate in secret, and not have flaunted your shame in your father's sight!"

"What?" said she.

"Ah! So you did not know that the two intrenchments are but sixty cubits apart, and that this Matho of yours, in the extravagance of his pride, has taken up a position precisely opposite to Hamilcar. He is there—your father—behind you; and if I were able to ascend the footpath which leads to the platform of the embankment I would shout to him, 'Come and see your daughter in the Barbarian's arms! For his delectation she has robed

## Within the Tent

herself in the garment of the Goddess, and in yielding up herself has abandoned at once the glory of your name, the majesty of the Gods, the vengeance of the fatherland, and the very safety of Carthage!" The working of his toothless mouth set his whole beard in motion; his eyes devoured her with their fixed gaze, and, panting in the dust, he repeated—

"Ah, sacrilegious wretch! Curses on you! Curses—curses!"

Salamambo had drawn the canvas aside, and was holding it up at arm's-length. Without answering him she was looking in Hamilcar's direction.

"This is the way, is it not?" she said.

"What is it to you? Turn yourself from it! Begone! Crush your face the rather against the ground! It is a sacred spot: your glance would defile it."

Throwing the zaïmph about her waist, she hastily picked up her veils, her cloak and her scarf. "I am going there," she cried, "as fast as I can," and slipping away she disappeared.

At first she walked onwards through the darkness without meeting anybody, for everyone was making his way towards the conflagration. The tumult was increasing, great flames cast a ruddy light upon the sky behind them. A long terrace brought her to a halt.

She turned herself about, to right and to left at random, seeking for a ladder, a rope, a stone, anything which might help her. She was afraid of Gisco; she seemed to be pursued by cries and footsteps. Daylight was beginning to appear. She



## Salammbo

discerned a track in the substance of the embankment ; inconvenienced by her robe she took the hem between her teeth, and with three leaps found herself upon the platform.

A loud shout broke out beneath her, in the shadow, such as she had heard at the foot of the galley staircase, and leaning over she made out Schafhabarim's man, with the two horses tied together.

All night he had wandered up and down between the two intrenchments ; then, alarmed by the conflagration, he had come back again in order if possible to see what was taking place in Matho's camp, and knowing that this spot was the nearest to his tent he had remained there without moving, in obedience to the orders of the priest.

He stood upright on one of the horses. Salammbo let herself slide down to him, and they set off at full gallop round the Punic camp, in the hope that somewhere or other they would discover a gate.

Matho had returned to his tent. The smoking lamp gave scarcely any light, and he fancied, even, that Salammbo was asleep. Then he gently felt the lion's skin, on the palm-wood couch. He called, but she did not answer, and he hastily tore aside a strip of canvas to let the daylight enter. The zaïmph had vanished.

The earth was shaken by a multitude of footsteps. Loud shouts arose in the air, neighings and the clash of arms ; clarion-blasts were sounding the charge. It was as though a hurricane were whirling about him. In a frenzy of rage he threw himself upon his weapons and rushed outside.

## Within the Tent.

Long files of Barbarians were descending the mountain at the double, while the Punic squares advanced to meet them, swaying to and fro with ponderous rhythmic tread. The rays of the sun rent the mist into floating cloudlets which gradually, as they rose, revealed standards, helmets, and the points of spears. With the rapid evolutions whole portions of ground still left in shadow seemed to change their places; elsewhere it was as though torrents were crossing one another, while thorny masses remained motionless between them. Matho could distinguish the captains, the soldiers, the heralds, and even the service men in the rear who rode upon asses. But instead of keeping his place in order to cover the infantry, Narr' Havas turned abruptly to the right as though he meant that Hamilcar should crush him.

His horsemen passed beyond the elephants, which were slackening their pace, and all the horses, stretching forward their unbridled heads, galloped at so furious a pace that their bellies seemed to touch the ground. Then, suddenly, Narr' Havas stepped resolutely up to a sentinel, threw down his sword, his lance, and his javelins, and disappeared among the Carthaginians.

The King of the Numidians, on reaching Hamilcar's tent, pointed to his men, who had halted some distance away.

"Barca b" he said, "I bring them to you. They are yours."

Then he threw himself prostrate in token of subjection, and to prove his fidelity recalled his entire behaviour since the commencement of the war.

## Salamambo

In the first place he had prevented the siege of Carthage and the massacre of the prisoners; then he had taken no advantage of the victory over Hanno after the defeat at Utica. As for the Tyrian cities, they were on the frontiers of his kingdom. Finally he had taken no part in the battle of the Macar, and had even absented himself for the very purpose of avoiding the necessity of fighting against the Suffete.

Narr' Havas, in short, had intended to aggrandise himself by making encroachments on the Punic provinces, and had aided or forsaken the Mercenaries according to the chances of victory. But seeing that in the long run Hamilcar would prove to be the stronger he had come over to him; and it is possible that ill-will towards Matho may have counted for something in his defection, whether on account of the command or of his old love for Salamambo.

Hamilcar heard him through without interruption. The man who could present himself thus amidst an army whence he had nothing to expect but vengeance was not to be despised as an auxiliary, and Hamilcar at once perceived the advantage of such an alliance for the accomplishment of his great schemes. With the Numidians he could get rid of the Libyans; then he would lure the west to the conquest of Iberia. Without asking him why he had not come sooner, or taking up any of his false statements, he kissed Narr' Havas, and smote his chest three times with his own.

It was despair, and a desire to end the situation that had led him to burn the camp of the Libyans.

## • Within the Tent

The army of Narr' Havas came to him like succour from the Gods.

"May the Baals be propitious to you!" he replied, concealing his delight. "What the Republic will do for you I do not know, but Hamilcar is not ungrateful."

The uproar increased; some officers came in. He went on speaking, arming himself the while.

"Now then, go back! With your horsemen you can crush their infantry between your elephants and mine! Courage! Give them no quarter!"

Narr' Havas was hurrying away when Salamambo appeared.

She quickly sprang from her horse, opened her broad cloak and, extending her arms, displayed the zaïmph.

The leather tent, fastened up at the corners, allowed a view of the entire mountain, covered with soldiers, and as it was situated in the centre, Salamambo was perceived from every side. A mighty clamour broke out, a long shout of triumph and of hope. Those who were marching halted; the dying supported themselves on their elbows and turned round to bless her. By this time all the Barbarians knew that she had recovered the zaïmph; they saw it, or thought they saw it, from afar, and other cries, of rage and vengeance these, resounded above the plaudits of the Carthaginians; so that the five armies, arrayed about the mountain, were stamping and yelling around Salamambo.

Hamilcar, unable to speak, nodded his head to her in thanks. His eyes rested alternately upon her and upon the zaïmph, and he observed that her little

## Salamambo

chain was broken. Seized by a terrible suspicion, he shuddered. But quickly resuming his impassibility he observed Narr' Havas out of the corner of his eye without turning his face.

The King of the Numidians was standing apart in a circumspect attitude ; on his forehead there remained a little of the dust with which he had come in contact when he prostrated himself upon the ground. At last the Suffete, advancing towards him, addressed him with an air of the utmost gravity.

"As a reward for the services you have done me, I give you, Narr' Havas, my daughter. Be my son," he added, "and defend your father."

Narr' Havas made a great gesture of surprise, then seized Hamilcar's hands and covered them with kisses.

Salamambo, calm as a statue, did not appear to understand. She faintly blushed ; her eyelids fell, and her long curving lashes cast their shadows on her cheeks.

Hamilcar wished to unite them at once in an indissoluble betrothal. A lance was placed in Salamambo's hands ; she offered it to Narr' Havas ; their thumbs were bound together by an ox-hide thong, then wheat was poured upon their heads and the grains, as they fell around them, rattled on the ground like dancing hail.

## XII

### THE AQUEDUCT

**T**WELVE hours later nothing remained of the Mercenaries but a mass of wounded, dead and dying men.

Hamilcar, emerging abruptly from the hollow of the ravine, had descended the western slope facing Hippo-Zarytus, and owing to the wider extent of open ground in that quarter, had taken care to entice the Barbarians thither. Narr' Havas had surrounded them with his horses, the Suffete meanwhile driving them back and crushing them; then, too, they were worsted beforehand through the loss of the zaïmph, for the very men who cared nothing about it had felt thereat a pang of distress and a diminution, as it were, of vital force. Hamilcar, indifferent to the vain satisfaction of remaining in possession of the field, had withdrawn a short distance to some heights upon the left, whence he commanded their position.

The outline of the camps could be distinguished from their sloping palisades. A long heap of black ashes was smoking upon the ground which the Libyans had occupied; the disturbance of the soil had left it undulating like the sea, and the tents, with their rags of canvas, had the vague effect of

## Salamambo

ships half lost among rocks. Scattered among the corpses were breastplates, forks, clarions, straw, clothing, and scraps of wood, iron and brass; here and there a phalaric on the point of extinction was burning close to a pile of baggage; in places the earth could not be seen for the shields; dead horses succeeded one another like a series of mounds; you could see legs, sandals, arms, coats of mail; heads with their helmets retained in place by the chin-strap rolled about like balls; scalps of hair were hanging from thorns; elephants with their entrails exposed and their towers still on their backs lay gasping out their lives in pools of blood; in walking one trod upon things that stuck to the feet, and there were patches of mud, although no rain had fallen.

Such was the profusion of corpses that they occupied the whole mountain from base to summit. The survivors remained motionless as the dead. Huddled together in irregular groups they eyed one another in silent terror.

Beyond a long stretch of herbage the lake of Hippo-Zarytus glittered beneath the setting sun. To the right, a confusion of white houses rose above a girdle of walls; then came the sea, stretching away to an indefinite distance. The Barbarians, resting their chins in their hands, sighed as they thought of their native lands. A cloud of grey dust was settling down.

There came a breath of evening breeze, and every bosom swelled; as it became cooler the dead bodies grew cold, and the creatures of carrion could be seen forsaking them, and running away over the

## ' The Aqueduct

warm sand. Ravens, perched on the tops of the boulders, sat motionless, watching the dying.

With the fall of night yellow-haired dogs, of the loathsome type which follows in the wake of armies, made their noiseless appearance among the Barbarians. First they licked the clotted blood on the stumps of limbs not yet cold; then they began to devour the corpses, attacking the body first of all.

One by one, like ghosts, those who had fled came back; the women, too, ventured to return, for despite the frightful massacre perpetrated by the Numidians there were some still left, especially among the Libyans.

Some lighted rope-ends in order to use them as torches. Others held pikes crossing one another, on which corpses were placed and carried away.

They lay stretched in long lines, open-mouthed, upon their backs, with their lances beside them; or else were heaped together in confusion, so that it was often necessary to search through a whole pile in order to discover the missing. Then a torch was slowly passed before their faces. There were complicated wounds inflicted by horrible weapons. Greenish shreds of flesh hung from their foreheads; they were cut into pieces, crushed even to the marrow, blue from strangulation or ripped up by the tusks of elephants. Though they had died almost simultaneously they were in different stages of corruption. The inhabitants of the north were swollen, livid and bloated, while the more sinewy Africans had the appearance of having been smoked, and were already withering up. The Mor-



## Salamambo:

cenaries could be distinguished by the marks tattooed upon their hands: the veterans of Antiochus had a sparrow-hawk; those who had served in Egypt the head of a baboon; those who had fought for the Asiatic princes an axe, a pomegranate or a hammer; those who had campaigned in the Greek republics the outline of a fort or the name of an archon, while some might be seen with their arms entirely covered with an accumulation of such symbols mingled with scars and fresh wounds.

For the men of Latin race—Samnites, Etruscans, Campanians and Brutians—four great pyres were erected.

The Greeks dug pits with the points of their swords. The Spartans took off their red cloaks and wrapped their dead in them; the Athenians laid theirs with faces towards the rising sun; the Cantabrians buried them beneath a heap of pebbles; the Nasamones bent them double and bound them with thongs of ox-hide, and the Garamantes took them away for burial upon the seashore, that they might be washed for ever by the waves. But the Latins grieved because they could not gather their ashes into urns; the Nomads regretted their hot sands which reduce corpses to mummies, and the Celts their three unhewn stones, beneath a watery sky, at the head of a gulf studded with islands.

Loud outcries arose, followed by a long silence. They were intended to compel the souls to return. Then the clamour broke out again, persistently, at regular intervals.

Excuses were made to the dead for not honouring them in the manner prescribed by the rites, a depriv-

## The Aqueduct

ation which condemned them to wander, for infinite periods of time, through every variety of chance and metamorphosis; they were questioned, and asked what they desired, and by others loaded with abuse for having allowed themselves to be vanquished.

Bloodless, faces, upturned here and there upon heaps of broken armour, shone pale beneath the light of the great pyres; tears drew forth tears, sobs grew more poignant, recognitions and embraces more frenzied. Women flung themselves upon the corpses, lip to lip and brow to brow; it was necessary to beat them off when the earth was filled in. They blackened their cheeks; they cut off their hair; they drew their own blood and let it pour into the graves; they gashed themselves in imitation of the wounds which disfigured the dead. Fierce outcries broke forth above the clash of cymbals. Some tore off their amulets and spat upon them. The dying wallowed in the blood-stained mire, biting their mutilated fists with rage, and forty-three Samnites in the flower of their youth slew one another like gladiators. Soon there was no more wood for the funeral-piles, the flames went out, all the sites available for burial were taken up, and wearied by their lamentations, weak and tottering, the survivors fell asleep beside their dead brethren, those who valued life full of anxiety, the others wishing that they might never awaken more.

With the first light of dawn soldiers appeared on the outskirts of the ground occupied by the Barbarians marching past with helmets hoisted on their pikes; they hailed the Mercenaries and asked them whether

## Salamambo

they had no message to send to their own countries. Others approached, and the Barbarians recognised some of their old comrades.

"The Suffete had offered all the prisoners the opportunity of serving with his troops. Several had boldly refused; and, determined neither to support them nor to hand them over to the mercies of the Great Council, he had sent them back, enjoining upon them that they should not again fight against Carthage. Those whom the fear of torture rendered amenable had been provided with arms taken from the enemy, and now made their appearance before the vanquished, not so much in order to win them over as from ostentation and curiosity.

First of all they described the kind treatment they had received at the hands of the Suffete, the Barbarians envying them while they listened, although at the same time they despised them. Then, at the first words of reproach, the cowards grew incensed, and keeping at a distance showed the others their own swords and cuirasses, challenging them with insults to come and take them. When the Barbarians took up stones they all took to their heels, and nothing was to be seen on the crest of the mountain save the tips of lances above the edge of the stockade.

Then a feeling of anguish heavier than the humiliation of defeat sank down upon the Barbarians. They thought of the futility of their courage, and remained motionless, staring before them, grinding their teeth.

To each one occurred the same idea. In a tumultuous mob they rushed upon the Carthaginian

## The Aqueduct

prisoners. By chance the Suffete's soldiers had failed to discover them, and as he had withdrawn from the field of battle they were still at the bottom of their pit.

They were arranged upon the ground, on a level space. A circle of sentinels was formed around them, and the women were allowed to enter, thirty or forty at a time. Anxious to make the best of the brief time allowed them they ran, trembling with excitement, from one to another, unable to make up their minds what to do to them; then bending over the miserable bodies they struck them, like washerwomen beating linen, with all their might; they lacerated them with their nails, screaming their husbands' names, and put out their eyes with their hairpins. After the women came the men, who tortured them from their feet, which they cut off at the ankles, to their brows, whence they removed circlets of skin to set upon their own heads. Most horrible were the devices of the Eaters-of-unclean-things. They inflamed their wounds by filling them with dust, vinegar and potsherds; behind them waited yet others, and as the blood flowed they rejoiced like grape-gatherers around the reeking vats.

Matho, meanwhile, remained sitting upon the ground in the very place where he happened to be when the battle was over, resting his elbows on his knees and his temples in his hands, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, no longer even thinking.

At the yells of delight uttered by the crowd he raised his head. Before him was a medley of baskets and coverings, together with a lion's skin, sheltered

## Salamambo

by a strip of canvas attached to a pole and trailing upon the ground. He recognised his own tent, and his eyes fastened themselves upon the ground as though Hamilcar's daughter had vanished beneath the earth.

The torn canvas flapped in the wind; at times its long shreds fluttered before his mouth, and he caught sight of a red mark like the print of a palm. It was the hand of Narr' Havas, the token of their alliance. Matho got up. He took a smouldering brand and threw it contemptuously upon the remains of his tent. Then with the toe of his boot he pushed back towards the flames everything which fell outside, that nothing might be left.

Suddenly, and so that none could say whence he sprang, Spendius made his appearance. The escaped slave had bound two splinters of a lance against his thigh, and was limping with a rueful expression, groaning as he did so.

"Take that off," said Matho; "I know how brave you are!" So overwhelmed was he with the injustice of the Gods that he no longer had the energy to be angry with men. Spendius, beckoning him, led him into the hollow crown of a low hill, where Zarxas and Autharitus were hiding.

They, like the slave, had fled, the one notwithstanding his cruel disposition, the other in spite of his courage. Who, said they, could have foreseen the treason of Narr' Havas, the burning of the Libyan camp, the loss of the zaimph, Hamilcar's sudden attack, above all the manœuvres whereby he had driven them back again into the hollow of the mountain before the direct onslaught of the Car-

## The Aqueduct

thaginians? Spendius did not confess his terror, and persisted in maintaining that his leg was broken.

At length the three chiefs and the schalischim asked one another what course was now to be adopted.

The road to Carthage was closed by Hamilcar; they were caught between his soldiers and the provinces of Narr' Havas; the Tyrian towns would join the victors; they would presently find themselves with their backs to the sea, and these united forces would crush them. Such must be the inevitable course of events.

There was thus no possibility of evading war; accordingly they were bound to pursue it to the bitter end. But how were all these disheartened men, with their wounds still bleeding, to be convinced of the necessity for ceaseless fighting?

"I will undertake that!" said Spendius.

Two hours later a man coming from the direction of Hippo-Zarytus climbed the mountain at full speed. He was flourishing some tablets at arm's-length, and as he shouted at the top of his voice the Barbarians gathered around him.

The tablets had been sent by the Greek soldiers in Sardinia. They advised their comrades in Africa to keep watch over Gisco and the other prisoners. One Hipponax, a merchant of Samos, who had come from Carthage, had apprised them that a plot was being organised in order to effect their escape, and they would urge the Barbarians to be prepared for every contingency; the Republic was powerful.

## Salamambo

Spendius' stratagem did not at first succeed in accordance with his hopes. Far from arousing anger the assurance of a fresh danger excited alarm; and remembering the warning but recently let fall in their midst by Hamilcar, they looked for some terrible and unforeseen event. The night was spent in agony; several even laid aside their arms in order to move the Suffete to pity whenever he should appear.

But at the third watch of the day following a second runner appeared still more breathless and begrimed with dust. The Greek snatched from his hands a roll of papyrus covered with Phœnician characters. It entreated the Mercenaries not to be cast down; the flower of the Tunisians were coming, with strong reinforcements.

First of all Spendius read the letter three times in succession, then, borne by two Cappadocians who carried him on their shoulders, he had himself taken from place to place, and read it over again. For seven hours he continued his harangue.

He reminded the Mercenaries of the Great Council's promises, the Africans of the cruelties of the stewards, and all the Barbarians of the injustice of Carthage. The Suffete's clemency was a snare to deceive them. Those who surrendered would be sold as slaves; the vanquished would be tortured to death. As for flight, what road was open to them? There was no people willing to receive them. By persisting in their endeavours, on the other hand, they would obtain at once liberty, revenge and money. Nor would they have long to wait; the inhabitants of Tunis, the whole of

## The Aqueduct

Libya, would rush to their assistance. He exhibited the unrolled papyrus.

"Look! Read! There are their promises! I am not lying."

Dogs, their black muzzles stained with red, were wandering hither and thither. Bare heads grew hot beneath the glaring sun. The half-buried corpses gave out an offensive odour, some even projecting from the earth from the waist upwards. Spendius called them to witness to the truth of his words; then he shook his fists in Hamilcar's direction.

Matho, moreover, was watching him and in order to cover his cowardice Spendius made such a display of anger that gradually he worked himself into a fury. Dedicating himself to the Gods, he heaped curses upon the Carthaginians. Torturing the prisoners was but child's play. Why spare them and drag such useless cattle about! "No! The time has come to make an end of them! Their schemes are known! A single one of them may be our ruin! Let there be no pity! Those who are true men will be known by the speed of their legs and the strength of their blows."

Thereupon they returned to the prisoners, several of whom were breathing still; a heel driven into the mouth despatched them, or else they were stabbed with the point of a javelin.

Then they thought of Gisco. He was nowhere to be seen, and they became anxious and perplexed. They wanted to convince themselves of his death, yet at the same time to have a share in it. At last he was discovered by three Samnite herdsmen at



## Salamambo

fifteen paces' distance from the spot previously occupied by Matho's tent. Recognising him by his long beard, they called the others.

Stretched upon his back with his arms against his flanks and his knees close together he looked like a dead man laid out for interment.

But his lean ribs were rising and falling, and his eyes, wide open amid the perfect pallor of his face, were fixed in an intolerable stare. At first the Barbarians stood watching him in utter amazement. He had almost been forgotten, from the time he began to live in the pit; old recollections rendered them uncomfortable, and they stood at a distance, not daring to raise their hands against him.

But those behind were murmuring and pushing when one of the Garamantes made his way through the crowd. He was brandishing a sickle, and everyone grasped his intention; their faces grew crimson, and smitten with shame they shouted, "Yes! yes!"

The man with the curved instrument went up to Gisco, took hold of his head and resting it on his knee sawed at it with rapid strokes; it fell, and two great jets of blood made a hole in the sand. Zarxas had pounced upon the head and ran, more nimbly than a leopard, towards the Carthaginians.

Then, when he was two-thirds of the way down the mountain he took Gisco's head from his bosom, and, holding it by the beard, whirled his arm rapidly several times, until the mass, released at last, described a long parabola and disappeared behind the Punic defences.

Presently there rose above the palisades two

## The Aqueduct

standards, crossed, the recognised sign by which corpses were reclaimed.

Thereupon four heralds, chosen for their breadth of chest, stepped forth with great clarions, and speaking through their brazen tubes, declared that henceforth there could be between Carthaginians and Barbarians neither faith, nor pity, nor Gods, that all overtures were thereby rejected in advance, and that messengers bearing flags of truce would be sent back with their hands cut off.

Immediately afterwards Spendius was despatched to Hippo-Zarytus for victuals, which were sent by the Tyrian city the same evening. They ate ravenously. Then, when they were revived, they speedily collected the remainder of their baggage and their broken weapons; the women congregated in the centre, and regardless of the wounded left weeping behind them they set off at a rapid pace along the shore, like a flock of wolves retreating.

They marched towards Hippo-Zarytus with the object of capturing it, for it was essential that they should obtain possession of a town.

Hamilcar, despite the pride with which he saw them flee before him, felt a pang of despair when he perceived them in the distance. They ought to be attacked at once with unexhausted troops. Another such day and the war would be over! If matters dragged on they would return in greater strength; the Tyrian cities would join them. His leniency to the vanquished had been ineffectual. He formed a resolve to show no mercy in future.

That evening he sent the Great Council a drome-

## Salamambo

dary laden with bracelets taken from the dead, and ordered them, with frightful threats, to despatch another army.

All had long ago given him up for lost, insomuch that their amazement, on hearing of his victory, amounted almost to terror. The restoration of the zaïmph, which was vaguely announced, completed the prodigy. Thus the Gods and the strength of Carthage seemed now to be upon his side.

Not one of his enemies hazarded a complaint or recrimination. Through the enthusiasm of one party and the cowardice of the other an army of five thousand men was ready before the prescribed limit of time had expired.

They promptly made for Utica in order to support the Suffete in the rear, while three thousand of the most capable embarked upon vessels which were to put them ashore at Hippo-Zarytus, whence they would repulse the Barbarians.

Hanno had accepted the leadership, but he entrusted the army to Magdassan, his second in command, in order to lead the landing forces in person, for he could no longer endure the jolting of a litter. His disease, which had attacked his lips and his nostrils, had created a great hole in his face; the interior of his throat was visible at ten paces' distance, and he knew his appearance to be so revolting that he wore a veil over his head like a woman.

Hippo-Zarytus paid no attention either to his summons or to that of the Barbarians; but every morning the inhabitants let down provisions to them in baskets, and from the tops of the towers

## The Aqueduct

shouted excuses on the ground of the demands made by the Republic, entreating them at the same time to go away. They signalled similar protestations to the Carthaginians, who had taken up a position at sea. •

Hanno contented himself with blockading the port, without risking an attack. Nevertheless he persuaded the magistrates of Hippo-Zarytus to receive three hundred soldiers within the town. Then he set out for the Cape of Grapes and made a wide circuit with the object of surrounding the Barbarians, an ill-timed and even dangerous operation. His jealousy would not allow him to assist the Suffete; he arrested his spies, frustrated all his plans and endangered the whole undertaking. At last Hamilcar wrote to the Great Council requesting them to rid him of Hanno, and the latter returned to Carthage in a fury against the meanness of the Ancients and the fatuity of his colleague. Thus, after all their hopes, the Carthaginians found themselves in a more grievous situation than ever, but they endeavoured not to reflect on it, or even speak of it.

As though these misfortunes were not enough for the time being, information was received that the Mercenaries of Sardinia had crucified their general, seized the strongholds and everywhere massacred those of Canaanite race. The Roman Populus threatened the Republic with instant hostilities if it did not hand over twelve hundred talents and the whole island of Sardinia. They had accepted the alliance proffered by the Barbarians, and they sent them flat-bottomed vessels laden with flour and

## Salamambo

dried meat. The Carthaginians pursued them and captured five hundred men; but three days later a flotilla from Bysacene, bringing provisions to Carthage, went down in a storm. Evidently the Gods were declaring against her.

Then the citizens of Hippo-Zarytus, under pretext of an alarm, compelled Hanno's three hundred soldiers to man her walls; thereupon, coming upon them from behind, they seized them suddenly by the legs and hurled them over the ramparts. A few who were not killed were pursued, and making for the sea were drowned.

Utica also was suffering from the presence of soldiers, for Magdassan had followed Hanno's example, and in accordance with his orders surrounded the town, turning a deaf ear to Hamilcar's entreaties. As for the soldiers quartered in the place, they were supplied with wine drugged with mandragora and murdered in their sleep. The Barbarians arrived at the same time; Magdassan took to flight, the gates flew open, and thenceforth the two Tyrian towns exhibited an obstinate devotion to their new friends, and an incredible hatred for their old allies.

This desertion from the Punic cause was a recommendation, an example to others. Hopes of deliverance revived. Populations, hitherto uncertain, hesitated no longer. All allegiance began to totter. The fact came to the Suffete's ears, and he had no expectation of assistance! He was now irrevocably lost.

He promptly dismissed Narr' Havas, that he might protect the frontiers of his own kingdom.

## The Aqueduct

For himself, he determined to return to Carthage in order to obtain soldiers and begin the war anew.

The Barbarians encamped at Hippo-Zarytus perceived his army as it descended the mountain.

Whither could the Carthaginians be going? Doubtless they were impelled by hunger and maddened by their sufferings were coming, in spite of their weakness, to offer them battle. But they were turning to the right—they were fleeing. There was a chance of overtaking them and destroying every one. The Barbarians hurried in pursuit.

The Carthaginians were stopped by the river. This time it was broad, and the west wind had not been blowing. Some of them swam across, others crossed upon their shields. They resumed their march; night fell, and they were no longer to be seen.

The Barbarians did not stop, but followed up the stream in search of a narrower place. The inhabitants of Tunis came hurrying up; those of Utica followed their example. At every bush their number increased, and the Carthaginians, casting themselves upon the ground, heard the tramp of their footsteps in the darkness. From time to time Barca had volleys of arrows discharged behind him, to delay them, and several were killed thereby. When day broke they were among the mountains of Ariana at the point where the road makes a bend.

Matho, who was leading the way, thought he could discern something green upon the horizon, on the crest of an eminence. Then the intervening ground fell away, and obelisks, domes and houses came into view! It was Carthage. He leaned

## Salamambo

against a tree lest he should fall, so rapid was the beating of his heart.

Thinking of all that had happened in his life since last he had traversed that road, he grew dizzy from sheer amazement. Then joy took possession of him at the thought of once more seeing Salamambo. The grounds he had for regarding her with abhorrence came back to his memory, only to be speedily thrust aside. Trembling, he gazed with fixed eyes at the lofty terrace of a palace situated beyond the temple of Eschmoun, and rising from among palm trees; his face was lit up by an ecstatic smile as though some great light had come to him; he flung out his arms, wafted kisses on the breeze, and murmured "Come! Come!" His breast heaved with a sigh, and two tears fell like long pearls upon his beard.

"What are you waiting for?" cried Spendius. "Make haste! Forward! The Suffete will escape us! Why your knees are tottering; you stare at me like a drunken man!"

He stamped with impatience, grew importunate, and winked his eye as though some end long aimed at were near at hand.

"Ah! We have done it now—done it at last! I have them!"

Such was his air of triumphant conviction that Matho, surprised out of his torpor, was fired with enthusiasm. The words of Spendius, coming as they did at the moment of his deepest distress, provoked his despair to the point of vengeance, and provided food for his wrath. Leaping upon one of the camels from among the baggage he tore off its

## The Aqueduct

halter, and with the long cord lashed the laggards with all his might, rushing in turn to right and to left in rear of the army, like a dog driving a flock.

At the sound of his stentorian voice the lines of men drew closer<sup>1</sup>, even the lame ones quickened their steps, and in the midst of the isthmus the interval diminished. The foremost of the Barbarians were marching in the dust raised by the Carthaginians. Closer together drew the two armies, till they were on the point of meeting. But the gate of Malqua, the gate of Tagaste and the great gate of Khamon swung open their doors. The Punic square parted asunder; three columns disappeared within it; they were seething beneath the arches of the gateways. Presently the mass, too densely packed together, ceased to advance; the pikes clashed in the air, and the arrows of the Barbarians flew into splinters against the walls.

They caught sight of Hamilcar on the threshold of the gateway of Khamon. Turning round he shouted to his men to open a passage. He dismounted from his horse, and pricking it in the haunch with the sword he was carrying sent it forth against the Barbarians.

It was a stallion of the Orynge<sup>1</sup> breed, fed upon balls of flour, and would bend its knees to allow its master to mount. Why then did he turn it adrift? Was it a sacrifice?

Away galloped the great horse into the midst of the lances, knocking men over, and entangling its feet in its own entrails until it fell; once more it rose and bounded furiously forward; and while they

<sup>1</sup> See Glossary.



## Salamambo

parted asunder, made attempts to stop it or looked on in amazement, the Carthaginians, drawing in their ranks, had entered the city, and the mighty gate closed echoing behind them.

It did not yield. The Barbarians dashed themselves against it, and for some minutes the entire length of the army swayed backwards and forwards with an oscillation which grew fainter and fainter till at length it ceased.

The Carthaginians had posted soldiers upon the aqueduct; they began to discharge stones, balls and pieces of timber. Spendius maintained that there was no necessity to persist, and the Barbarians withdrew to a position further off, all fully determined to lay siege to Carthage.

Meanwhile the news of the war had spread beyond the limits of the Punic empire, and from the Pillars of Hercules to the land beyond Cyrene the herdsmen meditated on it as they kept their flocks, and the caravans talked of it at night beneath the starlight. Carthage the great, mistress of the seas, splendid as the sun, terrible as a god, was attacked; the men were found who dared to do it! Many a time, indeed, the news of her fall had been asserted; and all had believed for all desired it—the subject populations, the tributary villages, the allied provinces, the independent hordes—alike those who abhorred her tyranny, those who envied her power, and those who coveted her wealth. The most daring had hastened to join the Mercenaries; the defeat of the Macar had hindered all the others. Finally they had regained confidence, had gradually advanced and joined

## The Aqueduct

forces, so that by this time the inhabitants of the regions to the east were among the sandhills of Clypea, on the other side of the gulf, and at sight of the Barbarians exposed themselves to view.

These were no Libyans from the neighbourhood of Carthage—they had long constituted the third army—but nomads from the plateau of Barca, vagabonds from cape Phiscus and the promontory of Derne, from Phazzana and Marmarica. They had crossed the desert, drinking from the brackish wells lined with masonry formed from camels' bones; Zuæces, clothed with ostrich plumes, had come in their four-horse chariots; Garamantes, disguised with black veils, rode sitting far back on their painted mares; others came on donkeys, wild asses, zebras and buffaloes; while some, in addition to their families and idols, bore also their boat-shaped cabin-roofs. There were Ammonians with limbs wrinkled by the warm water of their springs; Atarantes, who curse the sun; Troglodytes, who bury their dead, with laughter, beneath the branches of trees; hideous Ausæans, who eat locusts; Achyrmachidæ, who eat lice; and Gysantes, painted with vermilion, who eat monkeys.

All had ranged themselves in a long straight line upon the seashore, and afterwards advanced like clouds of sand raised by the wind. In the midst of the isthmus their entire mass came to a halt, since the Mercenaries, encamped before them near the walls, declined to move.

Then, from the direction of Mount Ariana, appeared the men of the West, the Numidians. Narr' Havas, in fact, governed the Massylii only,

## Salamambo

and since, moreover, a custom of theirs permitted them after a reverse to forsake their king, they had assembled upon the Zainus and had crossed it at the first movement made by Hamilcar. First of all came in hot haste the hunters from Malethut-Baal and Garaphos, clad in lions' skins and guiding their small, lean, long-maned horses with the hafts of their pikes; behind them marched the Gætuli with their cuirasses of serpent's skin; then the Pharusians, wearing tall crowns made of wax and resin; and the Cauni, Macari and the men from Tillabaris, each carrying two javelins and a round shield of hippopotamus hide. They halted below the Catacombs, among the first pools of the Lagoon.

But when the Libyans had moved on swarms of negroes were to be seen in the place they had occupied, like a cloud on a level with the ground. They had come from the White Harousch and the Black Harousch, from the desert of Augila, even from the great country of Agazymba, four months' journey to the south of the Garamantes, and from farther off still! In spite of their ornaments of red wood the filth upon their black skins gave them the appearance of mulberries which have long been rolled about in the dust. They wore drawers of bark fibre, tunics of dried grass, and wild beasts' muzzles upon their heads; yelping like wolves, they shook rods adorned with rings and flourished cows' tails attached to staves as though they had been standards.

Thronging behind the Nutnidians, the Maurusii and the Gætuli came the yellow-skinned men who

## The Aqueduct .

dwelt scattered among the cedar forests beyond Taggir. Quivers of cat-skin clattered on their shoulders, and they held in leash huge dogs as tall as donkeys, which did not bark.

Lastly, as though Africa were far from being drained of her population, and as though it had been necessary to raise further enthusiasm against Carthage by resorting to the very lowest races, there appeared, behind all the rest, men with animal profiles, chuckling with idiotic laughter—wretched creatures ravaged by hideous diseases, misshapen pigmies, mulattoes of doubtful sex, red-eyed albinos blinking in the sunlight—and as they stuttered forth their unintelligible sounds they placed a finger in their mouths to indicate their hunger.

There was no less confusion of weapons than of garments and of races. No death-dealing invention but was represented there, from wooden daggers, stone axes and ivory tridents to long slender sabres notched like saws and made of a pliant strip of copper. They wielded cutlasses ramifying into several branches like the horns of antelopes, pruning-hooks attached to cords, iron triangles, clubs and stilettos. Ethiopians from the Bambotus had little poisoned darts concealed in their hair; several had brought pebbles in sacks; others, empty-handed, chattered with their teeth.

The whole multitude swayed ceaselessly with a swell like the sea. Women, carrying their children at their hips, were knocked over by dromedaries smeared with tar like ships. Provisions were spilt from baskets; one could not walk without stepping

## Salamambo

upon fragments of salt, parcels of gum, rotten dates, and gourou nuts; and sometimes, hanging by a slender cord upon a breast covered with vermin, was a diamond for which satraps had sought, a stone of an almost mythical character and worth an empire's ransom. The greater part knew not what they desired. It was a fascination that drew them on, supplemented by curiosity. Nomads who had never seen a town were frightened by the shadow of the ramparts.

The isthmus was now completely hidden by men, and its long surface, upon which the tents seemed like huts in the midst of an inundation, stretched away to the outer lines of the other Barbariads, all glittering with steel and symmetrically laid out on both sides of the aqueduct.

The Carthaginians were still amidst all the alarm of their arrival when they perceived, coming straight towards them, what looked like monsters or like buildings—with masts, arms, ropes, joints, caps and armour—the siege engines sent by the Tyrian towns: sixty ballistæ, eighty onagers, thirty scorpions, fifty tollenones, twelve battering-rams and three gigantic catapults which hurled pieces of rock of fifteen talents weight. Pushed forward by masses of men clustering about their bases, they quivered at every step, and so came into position opposite the walls.

But several days were still required, in order to complete the preparations for the siege. The Mercenaries, having learnt wisdom from their defeats, had no intention of exposing themselves to the risk of useless engagements; on neither side

## The Aqueduct

was there any haste, since both knew well that they were about to enter upon a terrible encounter, which must result either in victory or in utter annihilation.

Carthage could offer a lengthened resistance; her broad ramparts presented a succession of projecting and re-entrant angles, an advantageous arrangement for repelling attacks.

On the side next the Catacombs, however, a portion had fallen down, and on dark nights lights could be seen in the hovels of Malqua between the dislocated blocks of stone. In certain places these erections rose above the ramparts. Within them dwelt, with their new husbands, the Mercenaries' wives whom Matho had driven away. Their feelings could not resist the sight of their former companions. They waved their scarfs from afar; when darkness fell they came to chat with the soldiers through the crevice in the wall, and one morning the Great Council learnt that all of them had fled. Some had crawled between the stones, while the bolder of them had let themselves down with cords.

At last Spendius resolved to carry out his scheme. Hitherto the war, by keeping him at a distance, had prevented him from achieving it, and since their return to Carthage it had seemed to him that the inhabitants suspected his design. But before long they lessened the number of sentinels upon the aqueduct; they had none too many for the defence of the city wall. . .

For several days the escaped slave practised shooting arrows at the flamingoes in the Lake.

## Sakammbo

Then, on a bright moonlight night, he requested Matho to kindle a great fire of straw, while all his men raised shouts, and, taking Zarxas with him, he set off along the shore of the gulf in the direction of Tunis.

When they found themselves on a level with the last arches they came straight back towards the aqueduct; the place was exposed, and they approached the base of the pillars on hands and knees.

The sentinels on the platform were marching unsuspectingly up and down.

Tall flames were seen; clarions were sounded, and the soldiers on sentry duty, thinking that an assault was being made, rushed precipitately towards Carthage.

One man only remained, standing darkly out against the background of the sky. Behind him shone the moon, and his gigantic shadow formed a walking obelisk, as it were, upon the plain.

They waited until he was well in front of them. Zarxas seized his sling, but either from prudence or from a thirst for cruelty, Spendius stopped him. "No, the whizzing of the ball would make a noise! Let me do it!"

Bracing the bow against the great toe of his left foot, he drew it with all his strength and took aim. The arrow left the string.

The man did not fall; he disappeared.

"If he were wounded," said Spendius, "we should hear him!" and with the assistance of a rope and a harpoon, as on the former occasion, he mounted rapidly from stage to stage. Then, when

## The Aqueduct

he was upon the top, close to the corpse, he let the rope fall. The Barbarian fastened a pickaxe and a mallet to it and retired.

The trumpets were no longer sounding ; all was now quiet. Spenhdius had raised one of the flagstones, had entered the water, and let the stone down again above him.

Reckoning the distance according to the number of his steps he reached the exact spot where he had observed a slanting crevice ; and for three hours, until morning arrived, he worked on furiously without a pause, breathing with difficulty through the interstices of the stones above him, tortured with pain, and twenty times believing himself at death's door. At last a cracking sound was heard ; a huge stone, bounding upon the lower tiers of arches, fell to the ground, and suddenly a cataract, a whole river, fell from the sky upon the plain. Cloven in the midst the aqueduct poured forth its contents. It meant death for Carthage, and victory for the Barbarians.

In a moment the Carthaginians, now awake, appeared upon walls, houses and temples. The Barbarians came hurrying and shouting to the spot. They danced madly around the great stream of water, drenching their heads in it, in the excess of their delight.

On top of the aqueduct a man was visible, dressed in a torn brown tunic. With hands upon his hips he stood bending over the edge, gazing beneath him as though amazed at his own handiwork.

Then he stood erect, and cast his eyes around the horizon with a haughty air which seemed to say :



## Salamambo

"All this is now mine!" The Barbarians burst into applause; the Carthaginians, grasping at length the extent of their disaster, yelled with despair. Then he began to run up and down the platform from end to end, and like the driver of a victorious chariot at the Olympian games, Spendius, transported with pride, raised his arms aloft.

## XIII

### MOLOCH

**T**HE Barbarians had no need of a wall of circumvallation on the side towards Africa ; the province was theirs. But to facilitate the approach to the walls they levelled the embankment which bordered the trench. Next, Matho divided the army into great semicircles, in such a manner as to surround Carthage more completely. The heavy-armed troops of the Mercenaries were placed in the front rank, behind them the slingers and horsemen, and, in the rear of all, the baggage, chariots and horses ; while in front of this multitude, and at three hundred paces from the towers, bristled the engines of war.

With all the infinite variety of their names (which changed several times in the course of ages) they were reducible to two systems : the one acting as slings, the other as bows.

The former class, the catapults, consisted of a square frame with two uprights and a horizontal bar. In the front part a cylinder, provided with cables, held down a huge pole which carried a spoon to hold the projectiles ; the base of the pole was confined in a web of twisted yarn, and when the cords were released it sprang up and struck the

## Salamambo

bar, which stopped it with a shock and increased its power.

Those of the second type presented a more complex form of mechanism : a cross-piece was attached at its centre to a short pillar ; here also there terminated a kind of channel which stood at right angles to the cross-piece, at the ends of which rose a pair of caps each containing a mass of twisted horse-hair ; to these caps were attached two pieces of timber to confine the extremities of a cord which was pulled back to the end of the channel by a tablet of bronze. This plate of metal, when set free by a spring, slid along its grooves and discharged the arrows.

The catapults were also indifferently called onagers, like wild asses which kick up pebbles with their feet, and the ballistæ scorpions on account of a hook which rose from the tablet and when depressed by a blow of the fist released the spring.

Their construction demanded skilful calculation ; the wood of which they were composed required to be chosen from the toughest varieties, their fittings must all be of brass, tension was effected by means of levers, pulleys, capstans or tread-wheels ; stout pivots varied the direction of their discharge, they were rolled forward upon cylinders, and the principal ones, which were brought up in pieces, were erected in face of the enemy.

The three large catapults Spendius placed opposite the three chief angles ; before each gate he placed a ram, before each tower a ballista, while carroballistæ moved about behind them. But it

## Moloch

was necessary to protect them from being set on fire by the besieged, and to fill up first of all the ditch which separated them from the walls.

They pushed forward shelters consisting of screens of green reeds, and semicircular constructions of oak, like enormous shields moving upon three wheels; the workmen were protected by little hovels of raw hides stuffed with seaweed; the catapults and ballistæ were guarded by rope-curtains soaked in vinegar to render them incombustible. The women and children picked up pebbles on the shore and gathered handfuls of earth which they brought to the soldiers.

The Carthaginians were also making ready.

Hamilcar had quickly reassured them by declaring that the cisterns contained water sufficient for a hundred and twenty-three days. This statement, together with his presence in their midst and, above all, that of the zaimph, gave them good hope. Carthage recovered from her depression, and those who were not of Canaanite origin were inspired by the enthusiasm of the others.

The slaves were armed, and the arsenals emptied; every citizen had his post and his special duty. There were twelve hundred survivors of those who had deserted to join the Carthaginians; the Suffete made them all officers; and the carpenters, the armourers, the blacksmiths and the jewellers were placed in charge of the siege-machines, of which the Carthaginians had preserved a few, despite the conditions of the Roman peace. These they put in repair, for they were skilled in work of this description.

## Salamambo

Two sides of the town, the northern and the eastern, being protected by the sea and by the gulf, remained unapproachable. Tree-trunks, millstones, jars of sulphur and vats full of oil were placed upon the rampart facing the Barbarians, where also furnaces were built. Stones were heaped on the platforms of the towers, and the houses immediately contiguous to the rampart were filled with sand in order to strengthen it and increase its thickness.

The Barbarians chafed against these arrangements. They wanted to fight at once. They overloaded the catapults to such an extent that the beams broke, and the attack was delayed.

At last, on the thirteenth day of the month of Schabar—at sunrise—a heavy blow was heard against the gate of Khamon.

Seventy-five soldiers were hauling the ropes arranged about the lower end of a gigantic beam which was suspended by chains from a gallows-shaped frame, and terminated by a ram's head of solid brass. It was bound with ox-hide, and hooped with iron here and there; it was three times the size of a man's body, and one hundred and twenty cubits long, and beneath the multitude of bare arms which propelled and withdrew it the beam swung backwards and forwards with a regular oscillation.

- The other rams before the other gates were set in motion. Men could be seen mounting from step to step within the hollow tread-wheels. Caps and pulleys creaked, the screens of cordage were lowered, volleys of stones and volleys of arrows burst forth at the same moment, while all the slingers ran promiscuously hither and thither. Some

## Moloçh

came close to the rampart, concealing pots of resin beneath their shields; then they flung them with all their might. The hail of balls, darts and fire passed over the foremost ranks in a curve which descended on the farther side of the walls. But upon their summit stood long cranes for stepping the masts of vessels, and these let down huge pincers, terminating in two semicircles with teeth on the inside. They gripped the rams; the soldiers clinging to the beam pulled backwards; the Carthaginians hauled in order to raise it, and the engagement continued until the evening.

When, on the following day, the Mercenaries resumed their task, the upper part of the walls was found to be entirely covered with cloths, bales of cotton and cushions; the loopholes were stopped up with mats, and between the cranes on the rampart could be seen a row of forks and blades fixed upon staves. A fierce resistance at once commenced.

The rams were battered by tree-trunks alternately raised and dropped by the aid of cables, hooks thrown by ballistæ tore the roofs from the shelters, and streams of flints and pebbles poured from the platforms of the towers.

At length the gates of Khamon and Tagaste were broken in by the rams. But the Carthaginians had heaped such a quantity of materials on the inside that their folding doors did not open, and the gates remained standing.

Augers were next applied to the joints of the walls in order to loosen the blocks. The machines were now better managed; those who served them were divided into squads, and from morning till night

## Salamambo

they worked unceasingly with the monotonous precision of a weaver's loom.

Spendius was never tired of directing them, and with his own hands he tightened the skeins of the ballistæ. In order to secure perfect equality of tension, the cords were stretched by striking alternately to right and to left, until the two sides gave forth the same note. Spendius would mount upon the frame, tap very gently with the tip of his foot, and strain his ears to listen, like a musician tuning a lyre. Then when the pole of the catapult sprang up, and the stones streamed forth in all directions, when the pillar of the ballista quivered with the shock of the discharge, and the darts poured forth in a stream, he would bend his whole body forward and fling out his arms as though he fain would follow them.

The soldiers admired his skill and carried out his instructions. Growing merry over their work, they made jokes upon the names of the machines. Thus, the pincers for seizing the rams being denominated *wolves*, and the covered galleries *vine-arbours*, they themselves were lambs, or were going grape-gathering; and when they loaded their pieces they said to the onagers: "Now then, give it them!" and to the scorpions, "Pierce them to the heart!"—jestes which, though always the same, kept up their courage.

Nevertheless the machines failed to demolish the rampart, which was constructed of two walls and filled with earth; they only destroyed the upper portions of the walls, and the besieged restored them every time. Matho gave orders for the

## Moloch

erection of wooden towers as high as the towers of stone. Turf, stakes, boulders, and chariots with their wheels were thrown into the trench to fill it up more rapidly ; before it was full the vast crowd of Barbarians surged in one great wave across the plain and dashed against the foot of the walls like a sea which has overflowed its shores.

They brought up rope-ladders, wooden ladders, and sambukes, that is to say a pair of masts, whence a series of bamboos terminated by a movable bridge were lowered by tackling. These formed a number of straight lines resting against the wall, and the Mercenaries, carrying their weapons in their hands, ascended them in single file. Not a Carthaginian was to be seen, and already they were two-thirds of the way up the rampart. Then the loopholes opened, and like dragons' jaws belched forth flames and smoke ; sand, scattered in showers, made its way between the joints of their armour ; pitch stuck to their garments ; liquid lead danced upon their helmets and made holes in their flesh ; their faces were bespattered by a rain of sparks, and eyeless orbits seemed to weep tears as large as almonds. Men, yellow with oil, and with burning hair, took to their heels and set others alight. Cloaks, dipped in blood, were thrown over their faces from a distance to extinguish them. Some who remained unwounded stood motionless, rigid as stakes, with open mouths and outstretched arms.

For several days in succession the assault was renewed, the Mercenaries hoping to succeed by sheer strength and audacity.

Sometimes a man standing on the shoulders of



## Salamambo

another drove a peg in between the stones, and then making use of it to mount still higher fixed a second and a third. Protected by the overhanging edge of the battlements they gradually ascended in this manner, but at a certain height they always fell back. The great trench was full to overflowing, the wounded and the dying lay heaped together with the corpses in promiscuous confusion beneath the footsteps of the living. Half-burnt trunks formed dark spots in a mass of exposed entrails, scattered brains and pools of blood; while arms and legs projecting half-way out of a heap stood upright like poles in a burnt vineyard.

Finding the ladders insufficient they made use of tollenones—instruments which consisted of a long beam fixed transversely upon another and supporting at its extremity a square basket capable of containing thirty foot-soldiers with their arms.

Matho wished to enter the first that was ready, but Spendius dissuaded him.

Some of the men bent over a windlass; the great beam rose, became horizontal, then almost perpendicular, and overweighted at the end bent like a mighty reed. The soldiers, huddled together, were concealed up to their chins, nothing being visible save the plumes of their helmets. At last, at the height of fifty cubits in the air, it swayed several times to right and to left, then sank; and like a giant arm, holding a troop of pigmies in its hand, deposited the basketful of men upon the edge of the wall. They leapt among the crowd and never came back.

The other tollenones were all quickly placed in

## Moloch

position. But a hundred times their number were required if the town was to be taken. They were turned to another and a deadly account; Ethiopian archers were placed in the baskets; then, the cables being made fast, they remained suspended and shot poisoned arrows. In this manner the fifty tollenones, which commanded the battlements, surrounded Carthage like a ring of monstrous vultures; and the negroes laughed to see the guards on the ramparts perish in horrible convulsions.

Hamilcar assigned their duty to heavy-armed men, and every morning made them drink the juice of certain herbs as a protection against poison.

One evening, when the sky was overcast, he embarked his best troops upon transport barges and rafts, and turning to the right on leaving the port, landed upon the Tænia. Thence they advanced against the first lines of the Barbarians, and taking them in flank, inflicted terrible slaughter. Men with torches in their hands descended the walls at night by means of ropes, set fire to the works of the Mercenaries and reascended.

Matho's pertinacity knew no bounds; each obstacle was but a stimulus to his wrath; he went to terrible and extravagant lengths. In his own mind he summoned Salammbo to meet him, and then awaited her. She did not come, thereby in his eyes becoming guilty of a fresh act of treason, and thenceforth hateful to him. Had he seen her dead body he might perhaps have gone away. He doubled the outposts, planted forks at the foot of the rampart, set caltrops in the ground and ordered the Libyans to bring him a whole forest that he

## Salamambo

might set fire to it, and burn Carthage like a litter of foxes.

Spendius remained obstinately bent upon the siege. He sought to invent such engines of terror as had never yet been built.

The rest of the Barbarians, encamped further off upon the isthmus, were amazed at these delays and began to grumble. They were let loose against the enemy.

They flung themselves upon the city, and with hangers and javelins thundered at the gates. But their bare bodies invited wounds, and the Carthaginians slaughtered them freely, to the delight of the Mercenaries, who doubtless coveted their share of the spoil. Quarrels and fights resulted, and as the country had been laid waste they soon came to seizing one another's provisions. They became discouraged, and numerous hordes went away, but so great was the Barbarian host that there was no apparent difference.

The best of them endeavoured to sink mines, but the ground fell in through being imperfectly supported. They began afresh in other places, but Hamilcar always guessed their direction by applying his ear to a bronze shield. He sank countermines beneath the paths which the wooden towers must follow, and when they attempted to move them forward they sank into the holes.

At length it was acknowledged by all that it was impossible to capture the city without raising a long terrace to the same height as the walls so that they could fight upon the same level; it would be paved along the top to admit of the

## Moloch

engines travelling upon it. When this was done it would be quite impossible for Carthage to resist.

The city was beginning to suffer from thirst. Water, which at the commencement of the siege was worth two kesitahs the bat, was now sold for a silver shekel; the supplies of meat and of corn were also running short, and there were fears of famine. Some went so far as to talk of useless mouths, which occasioned general alarm.

From the square of Khamon to the temple of Melkarth the streets were encumbered with corpses, and the summer being near its close the combatants were tormented by great black flies. Old men removed the wounded, and the devout persisted in celebrating the imaginary funerals of their relatives and friends who had perished on distant fields during the war. Wax statues with hair and clothes were exhibited across the doorways. They melted from the heat of the candles which were burning close at hand; the paint trickled over their shoulders, and tears streamed down the cheeks of the living as they chanted doleful songs beside them. Meanwhile the crowd ran to and fro; troops under arms passed by; officers shouted their orders, and the slock of the rams was constantly heard against the fortifications. The heat became so oppressive that the swollen corpses would no longer enter the coffins, and were burned in the middle of the courts. The fires, however, too closely confined, caught the neighbouring walls and long flames leaped suddenly from the houses like blood spurting from an artery.

## Salamambo

Carthage lay helpless within the embrace of Moloch, who held the ramparts in a grasp of iron, wallowed in the streets and devoured the very corpses themselves.

Men who in token of despair wore mantles made from the rags they had collected, stationed themselves at the corners where the roads met, inveighed against the Ancients and against Hamilcar, assured the people of the utter ruin impending, and exhorted them to general licence and destruction. Most dangerous were those who drank henbane; when the fit was upon them, believing themselves to be wild beasts, they leapt upon the passers-by and rent them. Crowds gathered about them and the defence of Carthage was forgotten. The Suffete conceived the idea of paying others to support his policy.

In order to keep the Spirit of the Gods within the city their images had been covered with chains. Black veils were placed upon the Patæci and hair-cloths about the altars. The people endeavoured to arouse the pride and jealousy of the Baals by chanting in their ears: "Thou art going to let them conquer thee! They, perchance, are the stronger! Show thyself and help us, that the nations may not say: 'Where are now their Gods?'"

• The colleges of priests were harassed by ceaseless anxiety. Especially were those of Rabbetna smitten with fear, since the restoration of the zaïmph had proved ineffectual. They remained in seclusion within the third enclosure, which was impregnable as a fortress. One, only among them dared to venture forth, the high priest Schahabarim.

He visited Salamambo. But either he remained

## Moloch

silent, watching her with fixed eyes, or else he was unsparing of his words and more severe than ever in his reproaches.

Incredible as the contradiction may seem, he could not forgive the girl for having obeyed his orders ; Schahabarim had guessed everything, and the persistence of this thought enhanced the jealous feelings which had their source in his impotence. He accused her of being the cause of the war. Matho, if he was to be believed, was besieging Carthage in order to recover the zaïmph, and Schahabarim poured forth imprecations and sarcasms upon the Barbarian's head, because he laid claim to the possession of sacred objects. That, however, was not what the priest really meant.

But Salamambo no longer felt any fear of him. The nervous distress from which she formerly suffered had left her ; she was now possessed by a strange calm. Her glance was less wandering, and shone with a clear bright flame.

The Python, however, was again ailing, and as Salamambo, on the contrary, was apparently recovering her health, Taanach, the old servant, rejoiced, convinced that the serpent's decline indicated its assumption of its mistress's malady.

One morning she discovered it tightly coiled up behind the ox-hide couch, colder than marble, with its head covered by a mass of worms. Her cries brought Salamambo, who stirred it about for some time with the tip of her sandal, and the slave was amazed at her indifference.

Hamilcar's daughter no longer prolonged her fasts with the same fervour. She spent days on her

## Salamambo

terrace, with her elbows resting on the balustrade, amusing herself by watching the scene before her. The edge of the walls on the farther side of the town made irregular zigzags against the sky-line, and the lances of the sentinels formed as it were a border of ears of corn along their entire length. Farther off, between the towers, she could perceive the evolutions of the Barbarians, and on days when the siege was relaxed she could even make out their occupations. They were mending their weapons, anointing their hair or washing their blood-stained arms in the sea; the tents were closed; the baggage-animals were feeding, and in the distance the scythes of the chariots, all drawn up in a semi-circle, stretched like a silver scimitar along the base of the hills. She would think of what Schahabarim had said to her. She was awaiting Narr' Havas, her betrothed, and despite her hatred of him she would have liked to see Matho once more. She alone, perhaps, among all the Carthaginians, had spoken to him without fear.

Frequently her father made his appearance in her room. He would sit down, breathless, upon the cushions and observe her in a manner that was almost tender, as though the sight of her afforded him relief from his fatigues. At times he would ask questions about her expedition to the 'Mercenaries' camp. He would even inquire whether perchance someone had not pressed her to undertake it, but she always shook her head in reply, so proud was Salamambo of having rescued the zaïmph.

Nevertheless the Suffete always returned to the

## Moloch

subject of Matho, on the pretext of seeking military information. He could not in the least understand how she had occupied the hours she had passed in his tent. Salammbo, in fact, made no mention of Gisco, for words had an effective power of their own, so that the force of curses which were retailed to anyone else might be turned against that person ; moreover she said nothing about her impulse to commit murder, from fear of being blamed for not having yielded to it. She said that the schalischim seemed furious with rage, that he had shouted a great deal, then that he had fallen asleep. Salammbo revealed nothing further, possibly out of shame, or else because in her extreme innocence she attached little or no importance to the soldier's kisses. Her impression of the whole affair was moreover so misty and depressing that it wavered before her mind like the memory of a tiresome dream ; she would not have known how or in what language to express it.

One evening when they happened to be facing one another thus Taanach burst in upon them in great alarm. An old man with a child was without, in the court, wanting to see the Suffete.

Hamilcar turned pale, then replied eagerly :  
"Show him up !"

Iddibal entered, omitting to prostrate himself in salutation. He held by the hand a lad dressed in a goat-skin mantle, and forthwith raised the hood which concealed his face.

• "There he is, my lord ! Take him !"

The Suffete retired with the slave to a corner of the chamber. . .



## Salamambo

The child remained standing, very erect, in the centre of the room, and with a gaze that was rather attentive than astonished let his eyes rove over the ceiling, the furniture, the pearl necklaces lying about upon the purple draperies and the imposing maiden who was bending down towards him.

He might be ten years old, and was no taller than a Roman sword. His prominent brows were shaded by crisp, curly hair. His eyes, you would have said, were seeking wider fields to explore. The nostrils of his delicate nose contracted and expanded with vigour; his whole person revealed the indefinable grandeur characteristic of those who are destined to great undertakings. When he had cast off his heavy cloak he stood clothed in a lynx-skin fastened about his waist and with his little bare feet, all white with dust, firmly planted on the stones of the floor. But he doubtless guessed that matters of importance were under discussion, for he remained motionless, with one hand behind his back, chin depressed and a finger in his mouth.

At length Hamilcar beckoned Salamambo and spoke to her in a low voice.

"You must keep him in your apartments, you understand? No one, no member of the household even, must know of his existence!"

And again, when they were outside the door, he asked of Iddibal whether he was really sure that no one had noticed them.

"No!" said the slave. "The streets were empty."

Every province being overrun by the war he had

## Moloch

become afraid for the safety of his master's son. Then, not knowing where to hide him, he had skirted the coast in a long-boat, and for three days had been tacking about in the gulf, watching the ramparts. At last, that evening, the environs of Khamon being to all appearance deserted, he had speedily run the passage, and the mouth of the harbour being open had landed near the arsenal.

Soon, however, the Barbarians stationed a great raft opposite the harbour to prevent the Carthaginians from leaving it. They heightened their wooden towers, and simultaneously the terrace rose.

The interception of communications with the outside world marked the beginning of an intolerable famine.

They slaughtered all the dogs, mules, and asses, and then the fifteen elephants brought back by the Suffete. The lions of the temple of Moloch had become frantic, and the sacred slaves no longer dared to go near them. At first they were fed with wounded Barbarians; then corpses which were still warm were thrown to them; these they would not touch, and every one of them died. People wandered along the old walls at twilight, and from between the stones gathered grass and flowers which they boiled in wine, for wine was cheaper than water. Others crept up to the enemy's outposts and stole food from beneath the tents; from sheer amazement the Barbarians sometimes allowed them to get away. At last a day came when the Ancients resolved to kill the horses of Eschmoun for their own benefit. These were sacred animals, whose manes the priests braided with ribbons of gold. By their

## Salamambo

existence they symbolised the motion of the sun, the idea of fire in its loftiest form. Their flesh was divided into equal portions and buried behind the altar. Then, on the pretext of some religious function, the Ancients went up every evening to the temple, regaled themselves in secret, and brought away a share for their children beneath their tunics. In the deserted quarters of the city, at a distance from the walls, the less poverty-stricken inhabitants had barricaded themselves within their houses from fear of the rest.

The stones of the catapults and the destructive operations enjoined for the sake of defence had caused heaps of ruins to accumulate in the midst of the streets. At the quietest hours of the day mobs of people would suddenly rush past with shouts ; and seen from the summit of the Acropolis the conflagrations sent forth as it were purple streamers, which were scattered here and there over the flat roofs and twisted about by the wind.

The three great catapults, in spite of all they had accomplished, did not cease working. The damage they effected was remarkable ; thus, a man's head flew up upon the pediment of the Syssitia ; in the street of Kinisdo a woman in childbirth was crushed by a block of marble, and her child carried with the bed as far as the square of Cynasyn, where the covering was found.

Most irritating of all were the balls of the slingers. They fell upon the roofs, in the gardens, and into the midst of the courts, while the occupants, their hearts big with grief, sat at table before their scanty fare. Imprinted upon these horrible missiles were

## Moloch

letters which left their marks upon the flesh, so that such insults as *swine, jackal, vermin* might be read upon the corpses; sometimes, too, such jests as *Catch! or, Serve me right!*

That part of the rampart which extended from the angle of the harbours to the cisterns was broken down, and the inhabitants of Malqua found themselves caught between the old wall of Byrsa in their rear and the Barbarians in front. But the Carthaginians had quite enough to do to thicken the wall and raise it as high as possible without concerning themselves with them. They were abandoned; every one perished, and though they were generally hated, the people conceived in consequence a great aversion to Hamilcar.

The next day he opened his pits of wheat, and his stewards gave it out to the people. For three days they ate to repletion.

But their thirst only became the more unbearable, and ever they saw before them the long cascade of clear water which streamed from the aqueduct. A delicate vapour arose from its base in the sunshine, with a rainbow at one side, and a little stream meandered across the plain until it fell into the gulf.

Hamilcar showed no sign of weakening. He was counting upon the occurrence of some decisive and extraordinary event.

His own slaves tore the sheets of silver from the temple of Melkarth; four long-boats were dragged out of the harbour and hauled by the aid of capstans to the beach below the Mappalia; a breach was made in the wall close to the shore, and they set

## Salamambo

off for Gaul, thence to buy Mercenaries regardless of price. Hamilcar, however, was distressed at his inability to communicate with the king of the Numidians, whom he knew to be waiting in the rear of the Barbarians and ready to fall upon them. But Narr' Havas, in his weakness, was not likely to run any risks alone, and the Suffete had the rampart raised a dozen handbreadths, the stores from the arsenals brought together in the Acropolis, and the engines of war once more repaired.

The twisted cords of the catapults were made of tendons taken from the necks of bulls or from the haunches of stags. But in Carthage there was neither bull nor stag. Hamilcar requested the Ancients to give up their wives' hair; all the women made the required sacrifice, but the quantity was insufficient. Twelve hundred slaves of marriageable age, destined for the purposes of prostitution in Greece and Italy, were kept in the buildings of the Syssitia, and their hair, rendered elastic by the use of unguents, would be admirably adapted for the engines of war. But its use would afterwards involve too serious a loss. It was therefore decided that the finest heads of hair should be selected from among the wives of the plebeians, but careless of their country's needs they screamed like madwomen when the servants of the Hundred came with their scissors to lay hands upon them.

The fury which animated the Barbarians had now redoubled. They might be seen in the distance using the fat from the dead to oil their machines, while others tore the nails from the corpses and sewed them end to end to form armour. They con-

## Moloch

ceived the idea of loading the catapults with jars of snakes brought by the negroes; the clay pots broke upon the pavement and the serpents ran hither and thither; they seemed to multiply and, such were their numbers, to issue naturally from the walls. Dissatisfied with their invention, the Barbarians then carried it to perfection, and discharged from their engines every description of filth: human excrement, scraps of carrion, and corpses. The plague again made its appearance. The teeth of the Carthaginians fell from their mouths, and their gums became discoloured like those of camels after too long a journey.

The machines were erected upon the terrace, though it had not yet everywhere reached the same height as the rampart. Before the twenty-three towers upon the fortifications rose twenty-three other towers, of wood. All the tollenones were mounted afresh, and among them, a little to the rear, appeared the formidable *helepolis* of Demetrius Poliorcetes, which Spendius had at last reconstructed. In shape pyramidal, like the lighthouse of Alexandria, it was a hundred and thirty cubits high and twenty-three wide, with nine stages, each smaller than the last, protected by scales of brass, provided with numerous doors and filled with soldiers. On the highest platform stood a catapult supported by two ballistæ.

Then Hamilcar had crosses erected for those who talked of surrender; and even the women were enlisted. The inhabitants slept in the streets and in agony awaited the course of events.

One morning shortly before sunrise on the seventh

## Salamambo

day of the month Nyssan they heard a great shout uttered by all the Barbarians at once; the leaden-tubed trumpets roared, and the great Paphlagonian horns bellowed like bulls. Everyone arose and hastened to the fortifications.

A forest of lances, pikes and swords bristled below them. It leapt at the walls, the ladders obtained a hold, and the heads of Barbarians appeared in the embrasures of the battlements.

Beams supported by long files of men belaboured the gates, and in places where the terrace fell short of the requisite height the Mercenaries sought to demolish the wall by advancing in dense bands, the first line crouching low, the second with bent knees, and the others successively rising higher and higher until the last, who remained erect; while elsewhere, in order to scale it, the tallest led the way, the shortest bringing up the rear, and all, holding their shields in their left arms rested them on their helmets and kept them so close together at the edges that one would have taken them for a collection of great tortoises. From these slanting masses the projectiles glanced aside.

The Carthaginians threw down millstones, pestles, vats, barrels, beds, anything which would act as a crushing weight. Some, armed with a fisherman's net, lay in wait in the embrasures, and when the Barbarian reached the summit he found himself entangled in the meshes and struggled like a fish. They demolished their own battlements; stretches of wall toppled over amid a mighty dust; the catapults on the terrace competed with one another in the discharge of their missiles, and their stones,

## Moloch

coming into collision, were shivered into a thousand fragments, which descended in a copious shower upon the combatants.

Before long the two hosts formed but a single huge chain of human bodies, a little less dense at the two ends ; it overflowed into the gaps in the terrace and swayed continually to and fro without advancing. Prone on the ground men grappled one another like wrestlers ; others trampled on them ; women leaned through the embrasures and screamed. Men dragged them down by their veils, and their bosoms shone white between the arms of the negroes as they buried their daggers in them. Tightly squeezed in the throng were corpses which did not fall ; held up by their comrades' shoulders they would move onward for minutes together, maintaining their erect position, their eyes fixed and staring. Some, with both temples pierced by a javelin, rolled their heads like bears ; mouths opened to scream remained wide agape ; severed hands leapt into the air ; mighty blows were struck, which were talked of long afterwards by those who survived.

Meanwhile arrows were streaming from the tops of the wooden towers and the towers of stone. Swiftly the tollenones shot forth their long antennæ, whence the Barbarians, who had plundered the old native cemetery below the Catacombs, hurled tombstones upon the Carthaginians. Sometimes the cables broke with the weight of the overloaded baskets, and masses of men, flinging up their arms, fell from a giddy height.

In order to force an entrance to the harbour and destroy the fleet, the heavy-armed veterans kept up



## Salamambo

till noon an unrelenting assault upon the Tænia. Hamilcar had a fire of damp straw lighted on the roof of Khamon, and blinded by the smoke they turned aside to the left and came to swell the horrible seething multitude in Malqua. Squadrons of stout fellows, picked for the purpose, had broken down three of the gates, but were stopped by lofty barricades of planks studded with nails; a fourth gate yielded without difficulty, they charged through it at a run and tumbled over and over into a pit filled with hidden snares. At the south-eastern angle Autharitus and his men knocked down the rampart where a fissure had been stopped up with bricks. Behind it the ground rose, and they climbed it in haste. But at the top they discovered a second wall, built of stones and long pieces of timber laid flat and alternating with one another like the squares on a chess-board; a Gallic method which the Suffete had adapted to the requirements of the situation. The Gauls fancied themselves before a town in their own country, and their half-hearted attack was beaten off.

From the street of Khamon to the Grass-market the track of the patrols was now in the hands of the Barbarians. The Samnites despatched the dying with a thrust from their hunting-spears, or, resting one foot upon the wall, stood watching the smoking ruins beneath them and the recommencement of the battle in the distance.

The slingers, disposed in the rear, still kept up their stream of missiles. But the Atarnanian slings, worn out with use, had lost their elasticity, and several threw pebbles with their hands like herds-

## Moloch

men, while others cast leaden balls with the handle of a whip. Zarxas, rushing hither and thither, urged on the Balearians, constantly thrusting his left hand into the two pouches which hung at his sides, while his right arm whirled like a chariot wheel.

Matho had at first restrained himself from taking part in the actual fighting that he might be in a better position to command the entire force of Barbarians at once. He was seen along the shore of the gulf with the Mercenaries, near the lagoon with the Numidians, at the edge of the lake among the Nègres, and from far away in the plain he kept sending forward bodies of soldiery which arrived in a ceaseless stream to maintain the attack on the line of fortifications. Gradually he himself had drawn near, and at last the smell of blood, the spectacle of the carnage and the din of the clarions made his heart leap within him. Returning to his tent, he cast his breastplate aside, and put on his lion's skin, as more suitable for battle. The muzzle fitted upon his head, encircling his face with a border of fangs; the two front paws lay crossed upon his chest, while the claws of the hind feet hung down below his knees.

He had retained his strong belt, wherein hung a gleaming double-edged battle-axe, and grasping his great sword in both hands rushed impetuously into the breach. On he marched, mowing down the Carthaginians all about him, like a man who prunes willow branches and tries to cut off as many as possible in order to earn more money. With a blow of his hilt he knocked backwards those who

## Salamambo

attempted to take him in flank ; attacked in front he thrust his assailants through ; if they fled he clove them asunder. Two men at once leapt upon his back, but he crushed them by springing backwards against a door. His sword rose and fell, and against the angle of a wall it was shivered into fragments. Then he took his heavy axe, and attacking them from behind and before, disembowelled them like a flock of sheep. Further and further they drew back on either side before him, and he reached the second enclosure, at the foot of the Acropolis, alone. The materials thrown down from the summit encumbered the steps, rose above the wall, and had fallen over it. Standing amid the ruins Matho turned round to call his companions.

He could see their crests scattered here and there amidst the multitude, but they were sinking, his comrades were on the verge of destruction ; he rushed towards them, the huge coronal of red plumes drew closer together, they joined him once more and surrounded him. But a vast throng was pouring out of the side streets. He was seized by the hips, raised aloft and swept onwards till he was again outside the rampart, at a point where the terrace was of considerable height.

Matho shouted a command ; the shields all sank down upon the helmets ; he leapt upon them in order somewhere or other to obtain a hold and so again effect an entrance into Carthage ; and, like a sea-god careering over his billows and shaking his trident, he ran across the shields as though they had been waves of bronze, brandishing his terrible axe.

## Moloch

But along the edge of the rampart walked a man in a white robe, unmoved, indifferent to the death which was all about him. Sometimes he stretched his right hand about his eyes to discover someone. It happened that Matho passed beneath him, and suddenly his eyes flashed fire, his livid countenance contracted, and raising his two lean arms, he poured forth a torrent of abuse.

Matho did not hear it, but he felt his heart pierced by a look so cruel and so fierce that a great cry escaped him. He hurled his long axe at the priest ; some people threw themselves upon Schahabarim, and Matho, seeing him no longer, fell backwards, exhausted.

A terrible cracking sound drew near, mingled with the rhythm of hoarse voices singing in cadence. It was the great *helepolis* surrounded by a throng of soldiers. They were pulling it with both hands, hauling with cords and pushing with their shoulders, for the slope of the embankment which rose from the plain to the terrace, though exceedingly gentle, was impracticable for engines of such prodigious weight. It was nevertheless provided with eight iron-bound wheels, and ever since the morning had been slowly advancing thus, like one mountain ascending another. Then a huge ram issued from its base, the doors upon the three sides facing the town were let down, and within appeared soldiers clad in armour, like columns of steel. Some were seen mounting and descending the two ladders which led from one stage to another ; some were waiting to rush forth immediately the cramp-hooks of the doors should touch the wall ; the cords of the

## Salamambo

ballistæ were being wound up and the great pole of the catapult was being lowered.

At this moment Hamilcar was standing erect on the roof of the temple of Melkarth. He had judged that the engine would come straight towards himself against that portion of the wall which, being the most impregnable, was, for that very reason, unprovided with sentinels. Already, for some time past, his slaves had been bringing skin-bottles up to the patrolling track, where they had constructed two transverse partitions of clay, so as to form a kind of basin. By imperceptible degrees the water was stealing through upon the terrace, and Hamilcar, strange to say, showed no concern about it.

But when the *helepolis* was about thirty paces distant he gave orders that planks should be placed across the streets between the houses, from the reservoirs to the rampart; and a long string of people kept passing helmets and jars from hand to hand and emptying them. The Carthaginians, however, were indignant at the waste of water. The ram was knocking down the wall, when suddenly a stream burst forth from the disjointed stones. Then the towering brazen mass, consisting of nine stories, and containing and giving employment to three thousand soldiers, began to rock gently like a ship. The water, in fact, soaking into the terrace, had broken up the roadway before it, and its wheels sank into the mud. On the first stage, between leather curtains, appeared the head of Spendius, blowing an ivory horn with all his might. The huge machine, with a convulsive upheaval, advanced, it might be, another ten paces; but the

## Moloçh

ground grew softer and softer, the mud reached to the axles, and with a frightful cant to one side the *helepolis* came to a standstill. The catapult rolled to the edge of the platform, and, borne onwards by the weight of its pole, fell over, smashing the lower stages beneath it. The soldiers, standing in the doorways, fell into the gulf, or clinging to the ends of the long beams increased by their weight the inclination of the *helepolis*, which fell to pieces, cracking at every joint.

The other Barbarians rushed forward to help them. They were gathered together in a compact mass. The Carthaginians came down, attacked them in rear, and slaughtered them at their ease. But the chariots with their scythes came galloping up and swept round the perimeter of the throng. The Carthaginians remounted the wall, night fell, and the Barbarians withdrew.

Throughout the plain nothing was now to be seen save a dark swarming movement from the bluish gulf to the white lagoon, while farther away where blood had flowed stretched the lake, a great crimson pool.

So encumbered was the terrace with corpses that one would have supposed it constructed of human bodies. In the midst stood the *helepolis* covered with armour, and from time to time huge fragments dropped away from it like the stones of a crumbling pyramid. Broad streaks, made by streams of lead, were visible on the walls; the wreck of a wooden tower was burning here and there, and the houses were indistinctly visible, like the steps of a ruined amphitheatre. Heavy clouds of smoke were mount-

## Salamambo

ing upwards, emitting whirling sparks which vanished in the dark sky.

Meanwhile the Carthaginians, consumed with thirst, had rushed to the reservoirs and broken open the doors. At the bottom lay a muddy pool.

What was to become of them now? "The Barbarians, moreover, were innumerable, and once recovered from their fatigue would return to the attack.

All night the people debated in groups at the corners of the streets. Some held that the women, the old men and the invalids should be sent away; others suggested the abandonment of the city and the establishment of a colony in some distant land. But there were no ships, and sunrise found them still undecided.

There was no fighting that day. Everyone was too much exhausted, and those who slept looked like dead men.

Then, when they came to reflect upon the cause of their disasters, the Carthaginians remembered that the annual offering to the Tyrian Melkarth had not been despatched to Phœnicia, and were seized with abject terror. The Gods, filled with indignation against the Republic, were doubtless about to pursue their vengeance.

They were looked upon as cruel masters, to be soothed with prayers and willing to be bribed by gifts. In comparison with Moloch-the-devourer the rest were but feeble. To him belonged the life, nay the very flesh, of men; and in order to preserve it the Carthaginians were accustomed to assuage

## Moloch

his wrath by the offering of a portion of it. Children were burnt on the forehead and on the nape of the neck by wisps of lighted wool, and as this method of satisfying Baal brought in much money to the priests they did not fail to recommend it as easier and more humane.

Now, however, the Republic herself was in danger. And since every gain must be purchased by some form of loss, and every transaction depended upon the need of the weaker and the demand of the stronger, no suffering was too great for the God, seeing that he took pleasure in its most horrible forms and that Carthage was now at his mercy. It was necessary, therefore, to satisfy him to the full. Past instances proved that by these means a scourge might be driven away. It was thought, moreover, that a sacrifice by fire would purify the city. The idea had already laid hold of the savage instinct of the populace; besides, the choice of victims must fall exclusively upon the great families.

A meeting of the Ancients was held, and the sitting proved a long one. Hanno was present, and as he could no longer sit down he remained in a reclining position near the door, half-hidden by the fringe of the tall hangings; and when the high-priest of Moloch asked them whether they would consent to give up their children his voice burst suddenly forth out of the shadow like the roar of a Genius from the depths of his cavern. He regretted, he said, that he had no offspring of his own to surrender, and he fixed his eyes upon Hamilcar, who was seated opposite to him at the



## Salamambo

farther end of the hall. Beneath his gaze the eyes of the Suffete fell in confusion. One after another they voted their approval with a nod of the head, and in accordance with the rites he was obliged to answer the high-priest, "Yes, so be it." Thereupon the Ancients decreed the sacrifice by a traditional phrase, for there are things which it is more embarrassing to say than to put into execution.

Scarcely was the decision arrived at before it became known throughout the city, and the sound of lamentation arose. The wailing of women was heard on every hand, while their husbands consoled them or met them with reproach and expostulation.

But three hours later a still more extraordinary piece of news was spread abroad: the Suffete had discovered springs of water at the foot of the cliff. There was a rush to the spot. Holes dug in the sand revealed the presence of water, and some were already stretched at full length, drinking.

Hamilcar himself did not know whether it was by the direction of the Gods or from a hazy recollection of a secret formerly confided to him by his father; but on leaving the Ancients he had gone down to the beach and, with the assistance of his slaves, had begun to dig up the shingle.

He supplied clothes, shoes, and wine. He gave all the rest of his private stores of wheat. He even permitted the crowd to enter his palace, and threw open the kitchens, the store-houses, and all the rooms, that of Salamambo excepted. He announced that six thousand Gallic Mercenaries were coming and that the King of Macedonia was sending soldiers.

## Moloch

But on the second day the springs began to run short, and by the evening of the third they were entirely exhausted. Then the decree of the Ancients passed once more from lip to lip, and the priests of Moloch commenced their work.

Men in black robes made their appearance in the houses. Many left their homes beforehand under pretext of business or the purchase of some delicacy; meanwhile the servants of Moloch dropped in and took the children away. Others, as though stupefied, surrendered them with their own hands. Then the children were taken to the temple of Tanit, where the priestesses were instructed to keep them well fed and entertained until the solemn day should arrive.

Suddenly the men presented themselves in the house of Hamilcar. They found him in his gardens:

"Barca," they said, "you know what we have come for . . . your son!" They added that he had been met in the heart of the Mappalia, one evening during the last moon, under the guidance of an old man.

At first it seemed as though something were choking him. But quickly realising that all denial would be vain Hamilcar bowed and led them into the house of business. At a sign from him slaves ran up and kept watch around it.

He entered Salamambo's chamber like a man distracted. With one hand he caught hold of Hannibal, with the other he tore off the cord of a garment which lay at hand, bound his feet and hands, thrust the end of it into his mouth to form a gag, and hid him beneath the ox-hide bed, throwing over it a

## Salamambo

large piece of drapery which hung down to the ground.

He strode to and fro, threw up his arms, turned upon his heel and bit his lips. Then he stood still, with staring eyes, panting as though he were at the point of death.

But he clapped his hands thrice, and Giddenem appeared.

"Listen!" he said. "Go and pick out a male child from among the slaves, one between eight and nine years old, with black hair and a prominent forehead. Bring him here! Make haste!"

Giddenem soon returned and thrust forward a little boy.

It was a puny child, at once bloated and emaciated; his skin seemed of the same grey hue as the noisome rags which hung from his hips; his head was sunk between his shoulders, and with the back of his hand he kept rubbing his eyes, which were smothered with flies.

How could anyone ever mistake him for Hannibal! And there was no time to choose another! Hamilcar looked at Giddenem with a desire to throttle him.

"Be off!" he shouted, and the overseer of the slaves fled.

Thus the misfortune he had feared so long had arrived, and with mighty efforts he struggled to find some way, some means, of escape.

Suddenly Abdalonim spoke, outside the door. The Suffete was wanted. The servants of Moloch were growing impatient.

## Moloch

Hamilcar restrained a cry, as though he had been burnt with a red-hot iron, and once more began to pace the chamber like a madman. Then he sank down beside the balustrade, and with his elbows on his knees pressed his forehead between his two clenched fists. .

In the porphyry basin there was still a little clear water destined for the ablutions of Salammbo. Despite all his pride and his repugnance, the Suffete plunged the child into it, and set to work like a slave-merchant to clean him with strigils and red earth. Then he took a couple of square pieces of purple cloth from the lockers around the wall, placed one upon his chest and the other upon his back, and fastened them together over his collar-bones with a pair of diamond clasps. He poured perfume over his head, hung a collar of electrum about his neck, and put sandals with heels of pearl—his daughter's own sandals—upon his feet. But he stamped with shame and vexation ; and Salammbo, who eagerly assisted him, was as pale as himself. Dazzled by such splendour, the boy smiled, and growing still bolder, was beginning to dance and clap his hands when Hamilcar dragged him away.

Afraid apparently of losing him, he held him tightly by the arm, and the child, who suffered some pain, cried a little as he ran by his side.

From beneath a palm tree beside the ergastulum there came a voice full of grief and entreaty. "My lord ! O my lord !" it murmured.

Turning round, Hamilcar perceived beside him a man of abject appearance, one of the wretched

## Salamambo

creatures who picked up a living about the establishment as best they might.

"What do you want?" said the Suffete.

"I am his father!" stammered the slave, trembling in a manner terrible to witness.

Hamilcar did not stop; and stooping low, with knees bent and head thrust forward, the other followed him. Unutterable agony convulsed his features, and what with his longing at once to question Hamilcar and to entreat him for mercy, he was choking with repressed sobs. At last he ventured to touch him lightly with one finger on the elbow.

"Are you going to . . . ?" He had not the strength to finish, and Hamilcar, amazed at such grief, stood still.

So vast was the gulf which separated them that he had never imagined there could be anything in common between them. That there should be seemed to him a kind of insult even: an encroachment on his privileges. He answered with a look colder and more crushing than an executioner's axe, and the slave fell fainting in the dust at his feet. Hamilcar strode onwards across his body.

In the great hall the three men in black robes stood awaiting him against the stone disc. Forthwith he rent his clothes, and with piercing cries rolled himself upon the stone pavement.

"Ah, poor little Hannibal! O my son! my comfort; my hope; my life! Kill me too! Take me away! Woe! Woe!" He rent his face with his nails, tore his hair and howled like the women who mourn at funerals. "Take him away, will you!"

## Moloch

I cannot bear it! Away with you! Kill me as you kill him!" The servants of Moloch were amazed that the great Hamilcar should be so faint-hearted. Their feelings were almost touched.

But there came a sound of bare feet, with a hoarse, quick-drawn panting, like the breathing of a wild beast as it runs, and on the threshold of the third gallery, between the ivory door-posts, there appeared a man, pale, terrible to look upon, with outstretched arms.

"My child!" he cried.

With a bound Hamilcar was upon him, and covering the slave's mouth with his hand, drowned his voice with his own.

"It is the old man who has brought him up! He calls him 'my child'! It will drive him mad! Enough! Enough!" And pushing the three priests and their victim before him by the shoulders, he went out with them, closing the door behind him with a powerful kick.

For some minutes Hamilcar listened intently, ever fearing to see them return. Afterwards he thought of putting the slave out of the way to make sure of his not speaking; but the danger was not entirely past, and his death, if the Gods should take offence at it, might return upon his son. So, changing his mind, he sent him by the hand of Taanach the best that his kitchens could supply: the quarter of a goat, some beans and preserved pomegranates. The slave, who had been long without food, threw himself upon the provisions, and his tears fell into the dishes.

At length Hamilcar returned to Salamambo and

## Salamambo

untied Hannibal's bonds. The child, in a fury, bit his hand so that the blood came. Hamilcar repulsed him with a caress.

To keep him quiet Salamambo sought to frighten him by telling him of Lamia, an ogress of Cyrene.

"Where is she?" he asked.

He was told that brigands were coming to put him in prison. "Let them come," he answered. "I will kill them."

Then Hamilcar told him the terrible truth. But he flew into a rage with his father, declaring that he, the master of Carthage, could crush the entire populace with ease.

At length, wearied out with his struggle and his anger, he fell into a sullen slumber, and, supported by a scarlet cushion behind his back, talked in his dreams. His head hung slightly backwards, and his little arm, extended from his body, remained perfectly straight, in an attitude of command.

When night was fully come Hamilcar lifted him tenderly, and descended the staircase of the galleys without a torch. Passing through the house of business, he took up a basket of grapes and a pitcher of water; before the statue of Aletes in the jewel-vault the child awoke, and smiled—like the other—in his father's arms, at the radiance of the lights about him.

Hamilcar was sure, now, that no one could deprive him of his son. The place was impenetrable, communicating with the shore by a subterranean passage known only to himself, and as he cast his eyes about him he drew a deep breath. Then he placed the child upon a stool, beside some golden shields.

## Moloch

There was none to watch him now; there were no longer any precautions to be observed, and he gave vent to his feelings. He threw himself upon his son like a mother whose firstborn has been lost and is found, straining him to his bosom, laughing and crying at the same time, calling him by the most endearing names and covering him with kisses. Alarmed by the fierceness of his affection, little Hannibal was now silent.

Hamilcar returned with noiseless footsteps, feeling the walls about him, and reached the great hall where the moonlight entered through one of the crevices in the dome; in the midst the slave, his hunger appeased, lay asleep at full length upon the marble pavement. Hamilcar, watching him, was moved by something akin to pity, and with the tip of his boot he pushed a piece of carpet under his head. Then, raising his eyes, he fixed his gaze upon Tanit, whose slender crescent glittered in the sky, and felt himself stronger than, and full of contempt for, the Baals.

The arrangements for the sacrifice had already begun.

A section of the wall of the temple of Moloch was pulled down, so that the brazen god might be drawn out without disturbing the ashes on the altar. Then, as soon as the sun appeared, the temple slaves pushed him towards the square of Khamon.

He moved backwards, gliding over cylinders; his shoulders rose above the top of the walls, and no sooner did they perceive him than the Cartha-



## Salamambo

ginians fled in haste, for Baal could be looked upon with impunity only during the exercise of his wrath.

An odour of aromatics pervaded the streets. From all the temples, which had just been thrown open, issued tabernacles borne either upon chariots or upon litters carried by the pontiffs. Great plumes of feathers swayed at their angles, and their sharp pinnacles, crowned with balls of crystal, of gold, of silver or of copper, tossed back the rays of the sun.

These, the Canaanite Baalim, offshoots of the supreme Baal, returned to their principle that they might humble themselves before his might and be swallowed up in his splendour.

The pavilion of Melkarth, made of fine purple, gave shelter to a flame of burning petroleum; on the hyacinth-coloured tabernacle of Khamon stood an ivory phallus, surrounded by a circle of precious stones; within the curtains of Eschmoun, blue, as the sky, slept a python which formed a circle with its tail, and the Dii Pataeci, borne in the arms of their priests, resembled great infants in swaddling clothes with their feet touching the ground.

Then came all the inferior types of deity: Baal-Samin, god of the stellar regions; Baal-Peor, god of sacred mountains; Baal-Zebub, god of corruption, and the gods of neighbouring countries and kindred races: Iarbal of Libya, Adrammelech of Chaldæa and Kijun of the Syrians; Derecto of the virgin-face, crawling upon her sins, and the corpse of Tammouz, drawn upon a catafalque among torches and heads of hair.

To render the sovereigns of the firmament sub-

## Moloch

servient to the Sun, and to prevent their individual influences from obstructing his, metal stars of various colours were waved at the ends of long poles, and from black Nebo, the genius of Mercury, to hideous Rahab, the constellation of the Crocodile, all the deities of the heavens were represented there. The Abaddirs, or stones which had fallen from the Moon, revolved in slings of silver thread; the priests of Ceres carried baskets of small loaves shaped to counterfeit the sex of a woman; others brought their fetishes and amulets; forgotten idols appeared once more, and even the ships had been shorn of their mystic symbols, as though Carthage had desired to concentrate all her attention upon the idea of death and desolation.

Each tabernacle was preceded by a man balancing a broad vessel of smoking incense upon his head. Clouds were hovering here and there, and amid these heavy vapours one could distinguish the hangings, pendants, and embroideries of the sacred pavilions. Their advance was slow, by reason of their enormous weight. Sometimes the axles of a chariot would become caught in the streets; then the devotees would seize the opportunity of touching the Baalim with their clothes, which were afterwards preserved as sacred objects.

The brazen statue continued its progress towards the square of Khamon. The Rich, bearing emerald-headed sceptres, set forth from the heart of Megara; the Afficients, wearing diadems upon their heads, had assembled in Kinisdo, and the superintendents of finance, the provincial governors, merchants, soldiers, sailors, and the numerous band of those

## Salamambo

employed at funerals, all bearing their badges of office or the implements of their trade, wended their way towards the tabernacles as they came down from the Acropolis between the colleges of pontiffs.

Out of respect for Moloch they had decked themselves with their most gorgeous jewels. "Diamonds glistened upon their black robes ; but their rings, now too large, slipped from their wasted hands, nor could anything be more melancholy than the silent crowd, where pallid faces were smitten by dancing earrings and brows drawn with terrible despair were pressed by tiaras of gold.

At last the Baal reached the precise centre of the square. His priests set up a barrier of trellis-work to keep back the multitude, and remained grouped about him, at his feet.

The priests of Khamon, in tawny woollen robes, fell into line under the columns of the portico before their temple ; those of Eschmoun, wearing linen mantles, with collars of hoopoes' heads and pointed tiaras, stationed themselves upon the steps of the Acropolis ; the priests of Melkarth, in violet tunics, appropriated the western side, the priests of the Abad-dirs, swathed in bands of Phrygian material, took up their position upon the east, while the wailers in their patched cloaks, the officiating priests of the Dii Patæci, and the Yidonim, who put dead men's bones in their mouths in order to learn the future, were drawn up on the southern side, together with the necromancers, whose bodies were tattooed from head to foot. The priests of Ceres, attired in robes of blue, had prudently halted in the street of Satheb,

## Moloch

and in a low voice were chanting a thesmophorion in the Megarian dialect.

Files of men, stark naked, arrived from time to time, all holding one another by the shoulders with outstretched arms. A hoarse, cavernous intonation proceeded from the depths of their chests; their eyeballs, fixed upon the colossus, gleamed amid the dust, and all, with a regular and simultaneous action, swayed their bodies as it were with the impulse of a single movement. So frantic were they that in order to restore order the temple slaves, striking them with their staves, made them lie flat upon the ground with their faces against the trellis-work of brass.

Then from the farther side of the square came forward a man in a white robe. Slowly making his way among the crowd, he was recognised as a priest of Tanit—the high-priest Schahabarim. Jeers arose, for the tyranny of the male principle was that day dominant in every conscience, and so completely was the Goddess forgotten that the absence even of her priests had passed unnoticed. But the astonishment increased when on reaching the trellis-work he was seen to open one of the gates destined for the admission of those who desired to offer victims. His intention, in the opinion of the priests of Moloch, was to subject their god to insult, and with vigorous gestures they sought to drive him back. To these men, supported by the meat from the burnt-offerings, clothed in purple like kings, and wearing three-tiered crowns, the pale eunuch, enfeebled by mortifications, was an object of scorn, and their black beards, spread abroad over their chests, shook with angry laughter.

## Salamambo

Schahabarim, making no reply, continued to advance; and slowly traversing the entire enclosure, he reached the spot between the legs of the colossus; then, thrusting forth his arms, he touched it gently on either side, a prescribed form of adoration. Too long had he been tormented by Rabbet, and from despair or else for want of a deity which should fully satisfy his thoughts, he at last declared himself a votary of Moloch.

Horried by this act of apostasy the crowd gave vent to a long murmur. They felt that it marked the severance of the last link which bound their souls to a merciful divinity.

But, mutilated as he was, Schahabarim could take no part in the worship of Baal. The red-robed men shut him out of the enclosure. Once in excluded, he walked round each of the colleges succession, and the priest, henceforth without a god, vanished among the crowd, which parted at his approach.

Meanwhile a fire of aloe, cedar, and laurel was burning between the legs of the colossus. The tips of his long wings entered the flames; the unguents with which he had been anointed ran down his brazen limbs like sweat. The children, swathed in black veils, formed a motionless ring about the circular stone upon which his feet were planted; and the palms of his hands, owing to the inordinate length of his arms, hung down beside them as though they would grasp this living crown and bear it aloft to the heavens.

The Rich, the Ancients, the women, and the whole multitude of the people were congregated to-

## Moloch

gether behind the priests and upon the house-tops. The great painted stars revolved no longer; the tabernacles were placed upon the ground, and the smoke of the censers rose perpendicularly upwards like mighty trees displaying the fainter blue of their branches in the midst of the azure.

Several swooned; others in their ecstasy became rigid as though turned to stone. Every heart was oppressed with infinite agony. One by one the last outcries died away, and the people of Carthage remained breathless, rapt with longing for their own horror.

At length the high-priest of Moloch passed his left hand beneath the veils of the children, plucked from each forehead a lock of hair and threw it into the flames, while the men in red mantles chanted the sacred hymn.

"Homage to thee, O Sun! Sovereign of both the zones, Creator self-begotten, Father and Mother, Father and Son, God and Goddess, Goddess and God!"

Their voices were lost in the sudden clamour of instruments all sounded at once to drown the cries of the victims. The scheminiths, with their eight strings, the kinnors with ten, the nebels with twelve, grated, whistled, and thundered. Huge skins bristling with pipes gave forth a shrill, rippling sound; tambourines, beaten with all the might of the player, resounded with dull, rapid strokes, and above the fury of the clarions rose the clacking of the salsalim, like the sound of grasshoppers' wings.

With a long hook the slaves of the temple

## Salamambo

opened the seven compartments which rose one above another in the frame of Baal. Flour was placed in the first, a pair of turtle-doves in the second, an ape in the third, a ram in the fourth, a ewe in the fifth, and as there was no bullock to be had for the sixth, a tanned skin from the sanctuary was thrown into it. The seventh division was left empty.

Before making a commencement it was well to try the arms of the God. Slender chains rose from his fingers to his shoulders and passed down behind him, where they were pulled by men in such a manner as to raise his two open hands to the height of his elbows, and at the same time to draw them together until they came in contact with his waist. This motion they performed several times in succession, moving in little jerks. Then the instruments became silent. The fire was roaring.

The pontiffs of Moloch, walking to and fro upon the great stone, were examining the throng. What was required was some individual sacrifice, some perfectly voluntary offering which would be considered as opening the way for others. At present, however, no one came forward, and the seven alleys which led from the barrier to the colossus were absolutely empty. Then, in order to encourage the people, the priests drew sharp stilettoes from their girdles and gashed their own faces. The Zealots, who had been lying upon the ground outside, were admitted to the enclosure. A bundle of horrible steel instruments was thrown to them and each one chose what method of torture he

## Moloch

pleased. They thrust long pins into their bosoms between their breasts ; they rent open their cheeks ; they placed crowns of thorns on their heads ; then they threw their arms about one another, and, surrounding the children, formed a second great circle, which contracted and expanded. They drew close to the balustrade, then threw themselves backwards, ever beginning anew, till their dizzy motion with its accompaniment of blood and shrieks lured the throng towards them.

Gradually the people advanced to the end of the alleys, and cast into the flames pearls, golden vases, cups, candlesticks, all, in short, that they possessed, the offerings becoming ever more splendid and more numerous. At last came a tottering creature, a man pallid and ghastly with terror, who thrust forward a child ; a little black mass was seen between the hands of the colossus ; it sank into the murky opening. The priests leaned over the edge of the great stone, and a new song broke forth, celebrating the joys of death and the new birth into eternity.

Slowly the victims ascended, and as the volumes of smoke rose eddying upwards, they seemed from a distance to vanish in a cloud. Not one moved ; their wrists and ankles were bound, and their sombre drapery prevented them alike from seeing anything, and from being recognised.

Hamjicar, wearing a red cloak like the priests of Moloch, stood close to the Baal before the great toe of his right foot. When the fourteenth child was brought forward, everyone could see that a great gesture of horror escaped him. But he soon



## Salamambo

resumed his former attitude, with folded arms and eyes fixed on the ground. On the other side of the statue stood the High Priest, motionless as Hamilcar. He was crowned with an Assyrian mitre; upon his bosom lay a golden plate covered with gems of prophetic virtue, and he bent his head to watch the iridescent gleams awakened by the reflected flame. He grew pale with dismay. Hamilcar bowed his head, and both were so close to the pyre that from time to time the skirts of their garments fluttered against it.

The motion of the brazen arms became more rapid. They no longer paused. As each child was placed within their embrace the priests of Moloch stretched forth their hands over it, to lay upon it the crimes of the people, crying as they did so, "They are oxen; not human beings!" and the surrounding multitude echoed, "Oxen! Oxen!" The devotees said, "Lord! Eat!" the priests of Proserpine bowed in their terror to the need of Carthage, and muttered the Eleusinian formula, "Pour down thy rain! Bring forth!"

No sooner had the victims reached the brink of the opening than they vanished like a drop of water on a red-hot plate, and a white cloud rose upwards amid the blaze of scarlet.

But the appetite of the God showed no abatement; he wished ever for more, and in order to supply him, the children were piled upon his hands and kept in place by a heavy chain. At the outset some of the devout had endeavoured to count them, to see whether their numbers corresponded to the days of the solar year; but others were put forward, and

## Moloch

the dizzy movement of the horrible arms rendered it impossible to distinguish them. It went on and on, no definite limit being assigned, until the evening. Then the interior partitions took on a duller glow; flesh could be seen burning, and some even fancied that they could recognise hair, limbs, and whole bodies.

Daylight faded and clouds gathered above the head of the Baal. The pyre, blazing no longer, formed a pyramid of ashes to the height of his knees; red from head to foot like a giant covered with blood, he seemed, as he stood with head thrown back, to stagger beneath the weight of his intoxication.

The more hurried the action of the priests the greater became the frenzy of the people; as the victims diminished in number, some cried out that they should be spared, others that yet more were required. It seemed as though the walls were giving way beneath the yells of horror and of mystic delight uttered by their human burden. Then some of the faithful made their way into the alleys dragging their clinging children with them, and beating them to make them let go that they might be delivered to the men in red. Sometimes the musicians ceased playing from exhaustion, and then could be heard the shrieks of the mothers and the crackling sound of fat as it ran down over the embers. The drippers of henbane, crawling on all fours, went round and round the colossus roaring like tigers; the Yidonim prophesied, the Zealots chanted with their torn lips, the trellis-work was broken down, for all wished to have some share

## Salamambo

in the sacrifice, and fathers who had lost their children long before cast their effigies, their toys, and the remains of their bones into the fire. Some who possessed knives flung themselves upon the others, and slew or were slain. The temple-slaves, with fans of bronze, gathered up the ashes from the edge of the great stone and scattered them in the air, that the sacrifice might be wafted abroad over the city, even to the region of the stars.

The din and the glare attracted the Barbarians to the foot of the walls; they clung to the wreck of the *helepolis* to obtain a better view, and, open-mouthed with horror, watched the scene.

## XIV

### THE DEFILE OF THE AXE

**T**HE Carthaginians had not yet reached their homes when the clouds grew denser above them ; those who raised their heads towards the colossus felt great drops upon their foreheads, and down came the rain.

All night it fell copiously, in torrents, with peals of thunder—the voice of Moloch ; he had mastered Tanit, who, fertilised at last, opened her mighty bosom from the heights of heaven. Sometimes a clear space would reveal her cushioned upon clouds, then the darkness would close behind her as though, too weary still, she would sleep again ; and the Carthaginians, believing universally that water is brought forth by the moon, shouted to ease her labour.

The rain lashed the house-roofs, and overflowed to form lakes in the courts, cascades upon the stairways, and eddies at the corners of the streets. It poured down in heavy, lukewarm sheets and in densely crowded streams ; it gushed foaming from the angles of every building ; it seemed as though cloths of a whitish colour were suspended in some unknown fashion against the walls, and the purified roofs of the temple shone black beneath the light-

## Salamambo

ning. Torrents streamed down the Acropolis in a thousand different directions; houses suddenly collapsed, and pieces of timber, old plaster, and furniture rushed by in the little rivers which poured impetuously over the cobbles of the gutters. "

Jars, pitchers, and cloths were put out to catch it; but the torches were extinguished; lighted brands were taken from the pyre, and the Carthaginians bent back their necks and held their mouths open in order to drink. Others plunged their arms into pools of dirty water up to the shoulders and drank such quantities that they vomited like buffaloes. Gradually the atmosphere became cool; they threw their limbs about as they breathed in the damp air, and intoxicating delight soon gave rise to a mighty hope. Their miseries were all forgotten, and once again the nation was born anew.

They felt, as it were, a need of visiting upon others the superfluous fury which they had not been able to employ against themselves. Such a sacrifice could not be in vain; they felt no remorse, but they were swept away by the frenzy arising from complicity in irreparable crime.

The Barbarians had encountered the storm in the shelter of their ill-closed tents; the morrow found them still benumbed with cold wading about in the mud, seeking their lost or ruined weapons and provisions.

Of his own accord Hamilcar sought an interview with Hanno, and making use of the full powers accorded him, placed the command in his hands. For some minutes the old Suffete hesitated, pulled this way and that by malice and by his desire for authority; nevertheless he accepted.

## The Defile of the Axe

Next Hamilcar sent out a galley armed with a catapult at each end. He stationed it in the gulf opposite the raft, and then embarked the strongest of his troops upon such vessels as were available. He was taking to flight! Steering towards the north, he vanished in the mist.

But three days later, when the attack was about to be renewed, a disordered crowd of men arrived from the coasts of Libya. Barca had made a descent upon their territory, had levied supplies on all hands, and was overrunning the country.

At that the Barbarians were as indignant as though he had been guilty of treachery towards them. Those who were the most weary of the siege, and more particularly the Gauls, did not hesitate to quit the walls and endeavour to overtake him. Spendius wished to rebuild the *helepolis*; Matho had sworn to follow a line which he had drawn in imagination from his own tent to Megara, and not one of their men stirred. But the others, under Autharitus, abandoned the western portion of the rampart and took their departure, and so profound was the prevailing negligence that no one thought of replacing them.

Narr' Havas was watching them from a distance among the mountains. During the night he transferred his entire force to the outer shore of the Lagoon, beside the sea, and entered into Carthage.

He presented himself as its deliverer, with six thousand men, all carrying flour under their cloaks, and forty elephants loaded with forage and dried meat. The populace were quickly flocking around them and giving them names. The sight of these

## Salamambo<sup>1</sup>

animals, sacred to Baal, was even more delightful to the Carthaginians than the arrival of such assistance; it was a pledge of the divinity's solicitude, a proof that at last, in order to defend them, he was going to take part in the war.

Narr' Havas accepted the compliments of the Ancients, and then ascended to Salamambo's palace.

He had not seen her since the occasion when, in Hamilcar's tent, surrounded by the five armies, he had felt the cold clasp of her soft little hand within his own; after the betrothal she had set out for Carthage. His passion, checked by other ambitions, had returned, and he now expected to enjoy his rights, to marry and take possession of her.

Salamambo could not understand how this young man could ever become her master! Though she prayed daily to Tanit for the death of Matho, her horror of the Libyan was growing less. She was vaguely sensible that there was something of an almost religious character about the hatred with which he had pursued her, and she would have liked to perceive in the person of Narr' Havas some reflection of that violence by which even yet she was fascinated. She desired to know him better, but would have found his presence embarrassing. She sent word that she could not receive him.

Hamilcar, moreover, had forbidden his servants to admit the king of the Numidians to her presence; he hoped to retain his devotion by postponing his reward until the end of the war, and his awe of the Suffete led Narr' Havas to withdraw.

Nevertheless he conducted himself haughtily towards the Hundred. He altered their arrangements,

## The Defile of the Axe

extorted privileges for his men, and assigned them posts of importance, so that all the Barbarians were amazed to behold Numidians upon the towers.

Still greater was the surprise of the Carthaginians at the arrival of an old Punic trireme bearing four hundred of their own troops who had been made prisoners during the Sicilian campaign. Hamilcar, in fact, had secretly sent back to the Quirites the crews of the Latin vessels which had been captured before the revolt of the Tyrian cities, and Rome, in return for his handsome behaviour, restored her prisoners. She spurned the overtures made by the Carthaginian Mercenaries in Sardinia, and even refused to recognise the inhabitants of Utica as her subjects.

Hiero, the governor of Syracuse, was influenced by her example. A balance of power between the two nations was essential if his provinces were to be preserved; he had therefore an interest in the welfare of the Canaanites, and declared his friendship for them by sending them twelve hundred head of cattle, together with fifty-three thousand nebel of pure wheat.

There was another and deeper reason why Carthage should receive the assistance of her neighbours: it was felt that if the Mercenaries should vanquish her, every menial, from soldier to scullion, would rise in rebellion, and no government, no household, would be able to resist them.

Meanwhile Hamilcar was scouring the country to the east. He drove back the Gauls, and all the Barbarians found themselves in their turn, as it were in a state of siege.



## Salamambo

Then he set to work to harass them. Now he came up with them, now he retired to a distance, and by constantly repeating this manœuvre gradually drew them away from their encampments. Spendius was compelled to follow them, and at last Matho yielded also.

The latter halted at Tunis, and shut himself up within its walls. This obstinacy was full of wisdom, for shortly afterwards Narr' Hayas was seen to leave by the gate of Khamon with his elephants and his soldiers; Hamilcar was recalling him. But the other Barbarians were already roaming the provinces in pursuit of the Suffete.

At Clypea he had received three thousand Gauls. He procured horses from Cyrenaica, armour from Brutium, and began the war anew.

Never had his genius been so impetuous and so fertile. For five moons he kept them at his heels. He had in view a definite goal towards which he desired to lead them.

At first the Barbarians had endeavoured to surround him with small detachments, but he always eluded them. They no longer separated their forces; their army numbered about forty thousand men, and several times they had the satisfaction of seeing the Carthaginians in retreat.

What harassed them most of all was the cavalry of Narr' Hayas! Oftentimes, during the most oppressive hours of the day, as they wended their way across the plains and dozed beneath the weight of their arms, a thick line of dust would arise upon the horizon, followed by a rush of galloping horses,

## The Defile of the Axe

and from the heart of a cloud teeming with flaming eyes there came a shower of darts. Clad in white cloaks, the Numidians raised their arms aloft with loud cries, and gripping their prancing stallions with their knees, turned them sharply round and disappeared. They always had a supply of javelins loaded upon camels some distance away, and they would come back more terrible than before, yelling like wolves, and like vultures once more taking to flight. One by one those of the Barbarians who occupied the outside ranks fell, and so matters continued until the evening, when they attempted to penetrate the mountains.

Though this involved danger to the elephants, Hamilcar plunged among them. He followed the long chain which extends from Cape Hermæum to the summit of Zagouan. This the Barbarians supposed to be his method of concealing the scanty numbers of his troops. But the perpetual uncertainty in which he kept them finally exasperated them more than any defeat. Still, they did not lose heart, and kept on marching behind him.

At last, one evening, among some huge rocks at the entrance to a defile between the Silver Mountain and the Lead Mountain, they surprised a body of light armed men. The entire army was undoubtedly just in advance, for they could hear the sound of tramping and of clarions; the Carthaginians must be hurrying through the gorge. It descended into a plain shaped like the head of an axe and hemmed in by lofty crags. Into this the Barbarians plunged, in the hope of overtaking the velites; at the farther end, amid galloping cattle, were yet other Cartha-

## Salamambo

ginians, fleeing in disorder. They caught sight of a man in a red cloak, they shouted to one another that it was the Suffete, and their fury and exultation passed all bounds. Several of them, the laggards or else the more prudent, had remained on the threshold of the pass, but a body of cavalry, issuing from a wood, drove them on after the others with lance and sabre, and soon all the Barbarians were in the plain below.

For some time the vast body of men swayed to and fro, then it came to a halt. No outlet was to be discovered.

Those who were nearest to the defile retraced their steps, but the passage had entirely disappeared. They called out to those in the front ranks to make them go on: they were being crushed against the mountain-side. They shouted abuse to their comrades in the distance because they could not find the way out.

No sooner, in fact, had the Barbarians descended than the rocks had been prised up with timbers and overturned by men who lay concealed behind them, and rolling in confusion down the rapid slope, the enormous blocks had completely closed the narrow entrance.

• At the opposite end of the plain was a long passage, broken by fissures here and there, and leading to a ravine which ascended to the plateau above, where the Punic army was stationed. In this passage ladders had been placed beforehand against the wall of the cliff, and the velites, covered by the windings of the chasms, had succeeded in grasping and ascending them before they were

## The Defile of the Axe

overtaken. Several even went so far as to the opening of the ravine, whence they were drawn up with ropes, the soil being here composed of a shifting sand and so steep that it was impossible to ascend it even upon hands and knees. A moment later, and the Barbarians were upon the spot, but a portcullis forty cubits high and constructed to the exact measure of the opening was suddenly lowered before them like a rampart let down from heaven.

Success, therefore, had crowned the Suffete's plans. None of the Mercenaries were acquainted with the mountain, and marching at the head of the columns they had led the others on. The rocks, somewhat narrow at the base, had been overturned without difficulty; and while they were all hurrying forwards, his army, then upon the horizon, had shouted as though in distress. Hamilcar, it was true, might lose his velites, of whom, in fact, one half only were left, but he would have sacrificed twenty times as many for the success of such an enterprise.

Till daylight the Barbarians kept driving each other in compact ranks from end to end of the plain, feeling the crags with their hands in search of some passage out.

Day broke at last, and all about them they perceived a great white wall, perpendicularly hewn. Of freedom, not a chance, not a hope! The two natural outlets from this trap were closed by the portcullis and the pile of rocks.

And then every man looked at his neighbour without a word. They sank down where they

## Salamambo

were, with the sense of an icy chill in their loins and of an overwhelming weight in their eyelids.

Then they leapt to their feet and hurled themselves against the rocks, but those at the bottom were immovable owing to the pressure of those above. They tried to get a grip of them in order to attain the summit, but the protuberant shape of the huge masses rendered it impossible to obtain a hold. They sought to split the rock on each side of the gorge, but their tools broke. They made a great fire with the tent-poles, but the fire could not burn the mountain.

They came back to the portcullis ; it was studded with long nails, stout as a pike, sharp as the spines of a porcupine, and thicker than the bristles of a brush. But such was their fury that they flung themselves against it. The foremost buried themselves in it up to the backbone, those immediately following streamed over them, and all fell back again leaving shreds of human flesh and blood-stained hair attached to the horrible branches.

When their discouragement was somewhat abated, they took stock of their provisions. The Mercenaries, whose baggage was lost, had barely sufficient for two days, and all the others were absolutely destitute, for they had been awaiting a convoy promised by the southern villages.

There were, however, some bulls straying about, which the Carthaginians had let loose in the gorge in order to entice the Barbarians. These were killed with lances and eaten, and with full stomachs their thoughts were less dismal.

The next day they slaughtered all the mules, of

## The Defile of the Axe

which there were about a couple of score ; after that they scraped their skins, boiled their entrails, and crushed their bones. They did not yet despair ; the army of Tunis had doubtless received the intelligence and would come to help them.

But on the evening of the fifth day their hunger increased twofold. They gnawed their sword-belts and the little sponges with which the inner edge of their helmets was lined.

Forty thousand in number, these men were closely crowded together within the kind of hippodrome formed about them by the mountain. Some remained in front of the portcullis, or at the base of the pile of rocks, while the remainder were strewn confusedly about the plain. The strong shunned one another, and the timid sought the society of the brave, who nevertheless could not save them.

The bodies of the velites, being attacked by decomposition, had been buried in haste, and the situation of their graves could no longer be detected.

The Barbarians lay stretched upon the ground in languid misery. Here and there a veteran passed between their lines, and they would shout curses against the Carthaginians, against Hamilcar, against Matho even, though he was guiltless of their disaster ; it seemed as though their anguish would not have been so great if there had been others to share it. Then they would groan, and some, like little children, would sob beneath their breath.

They would come up to their officers and implore them for something to ease their sufferings. The

## Salamambo<sup>6</sup>

others made no reply, or else, in a sudden fit of fury, would pick up a stone and dash it in their faces.

Several of them, in fact, had a store<sup>6</sup> of food carefully preserved in a hole in the earth: a few handfuls of dates, or a little flour, which they ate at night with their heads concealed beneath their cloaks. Those who had swords kept them ready drawn in their hands; the most mistrustful would preserve a standing posture with their backs against the crag.

- They threatened their leaders, upon whom they laid the blame. Autharitus was not afraid to show himself. With the indefatigable obstinacy of the Barbarian, he would go twenty times a day towards the rocks at the extremity of the plain, hoping each time to find them perhaps displaced, and with his heavy, fur-laden shoulders swaying to and fro, he reminded his comrades of a bear coming out of his cave in the spring to see whether the snows have melted.

Spendius, with a band of Greeks about him, remained hidden in one of the fissures; he was afraid, and spread a report that he was dead.

- Their leanness was now ghastly to behold; their skin became marbled with bluish streaks. During the evening of the ninth day three Iberians died.

Their companions quitted the place in terror; they were stripped, and the white, naked bodies were left upon the sand in the sunshine.

Then the Garamantes began to prowl slowly round the spot. They were men accustomed to the life of the wilderness, and revered no deity. At last the oldest of the troop gave a signal, and stooping over

## The Defile of the Axe

the corpses, they cut off strips of flesh with their knives ; then they squatted on their heels and ate. The others looked on from a distance, with exclamations of horror ; many, however, at the bottom of their hearts, were envious of their courage.

At midnight some of these gathered together, and concealing their eagerness, asked for a tiny mouthful, simply, they said, in order to try. Then bolder spirits came up ; their number grew, and soon there was a crowd. Almost all of them, at the sensation of the cold flesh against their lips, let their hands fall ; others, on the contrary, devoured it with ecstasy.

They encouraged each other in order to obtain the justification of example. Some who had at first refused went to see the Garamantes and did not come back. They cooked the fragments of flesh over hot embers on the point of a sword ; they seasoned them with dust and quarrelled over the best portions. When nothing of the three corpses was left, their eyes ranged the plain in search of others.

• But had they not got some Carthaginians, twenty captives taken in the last encounter, whom hitherto no one had noticed ? So the prisoners disappeared ; moreover, it afforded them revenge. Then, since one must live, since the taste for such food had developed, and since they were dying, they slew the water-carriers, the grooms, and all the Mercenaries' servants. Every day a number were killed. Some ate freely, and recovering their strength were no longer dejected.

• This resource soon came to an end. Then they



## Salamambo

began to hanker after the sick and the wounded. They could not recover, and might as well be put out of their misery, and no sooner did a man stagger than everyone cried out that it was all over with him now ; he ought to be devoted to the service of others. Artful means were employed to hasten their end ; they were robbed of the last scrap of their loathsome food, or trodden on, apparently without intention ; the dying, to make believe that they were vigorous, attempted to stretch their arms, rise to their feet, and laugh. Men who had lost consciousness recovered it at the contact of a jagged blade sawing off one of their limbs, and out of pure savagery the executioners persisted in their work when there was no need for it, in order to slake their fury.

On the fourteenth day, as often happens in those regions at the close of winter, a heavy, warm fog descended upon the army. The alteration of temperature was followed by numerous deaths, and in the hot, moist atmosphere, shut in between the mountain walls, corruption set in with frightful rapidity. The drizzling mist, softening the corpses as it fell, soon converted the plain into one mass of putrefaction. Whitish vapours hovered about it, stinging the nostrils, penetrating the skin, confusing the eyesight, and the Barbarians fancied that in what they believed to be the escaping breath of their comrades they could perceive their departing souls. Overwhelmed with unutterable nausea, they could endure it no longer, and preferred to die.

Two days later the atmosphere cleared, and hunger resumed its sway. Sometimes it seemed as though

## The Defile of the Axe

their stomachs were being torn by pincers. Then they would roll themselves on the ground in convulsions, throw handfuls of earth into their mouths, bite their arms, and burst into frenzied laughter.

Still worse were the torments of thirst, for of water they had not a drop, the skins having been completely exhausted since the ninth day. To beguile their craving they would hold against their tongues the metal scales of their belts, or the ivory hilts and steel blades of their swords. Old caravan drivers compressed their waists with cords. Others would suck a pebble. They drank urine cooled in brazen helmets.

And all this time they kept expecting the army from Tunis! The length of time that it took to come, as measured by their calculations, was a sure sign that it would arrive ere long. Matho, moreover, was true as steel; he would never abandon them. "They will be here to-morrow!" they told themselves, and to-morrow slipped away.

At first they had prayed, made vows, and performed all sorts of incantations. Now they had nothing but hatred for their Divinities, and sought to be revenged on them by trying to disbelieve in them.

The first to succumb were the men of ardent temperament; the Africans held out better than the Gauls. Zarxas lay motionless stretched at full length among the Balearians, his hair flowing over his arm. Spendius discovered a plant with broad, juicy leaves. To keep others away from it he pronounced it poisonous, and then lived upon it himself.

## Salamambo

They were too weak to bring down the ravens on the wing with stones. Sometimes when a lammergeyer, perched upon a corpse, had been long engaged in tearing it to pieces, a man would begin crawling towards it with a javelin between his teeth. Supporting himself upon one arm, he would take careful aim and then hurl his weapon. Disturbed by the sound, the white-feathered brute would pause, gaze calmly around like a cormorant upon a crag, and once more bury its hideous yellow beak within its prey, while the man fell flat in the dust from despair. Some managed to find chameleons and snakes. But what kept them alive was the desire to live. On that one idea they concentrated their souls to the exclusion of every other, prolonging life by the very effort of will with which they clung to it. Here and there in the midst of the plain were groups of the most stoical, seated in rings with the dead bodies around them ; wrapped in their cloaks, they silently resigned themselves to their melancholy.

Those who were city-bred thought of the noisy streets, the taverns, the theatres, the baths, and the barbers' shops, where one learns the gossip of the day. To others came pictures of the open country, with yellow corn waving in the sunset and great oxen climbing the slopes of the hills bearing their ploughshares on their necks. Those who had travelled dreamed of reservoirs of water, the hunters of their forests, the veterans of their battles; and in their drowsy torpor their thoughts came crowding one upon another with the precipitation and distinctness of dreams. Possessed by sudden hallucinations.

## The Defile of the Axe

they would seek a door of escape in the mountain side and endeavour to pass through it. Others, in the belief that they were at sea in a storm, gave orders for the management of a ship, or shrank back in terror from Punic battalions which they perceived in the clouds above them. Some there were who sang, fancying themselves at a feast.

Many, under the influence of a singular mania, kept persistently repeating the same word or the same gesture. Then, if they happened to raise their heads and look at one another, sobs would choke them at the discovery of the frightful ravages wrought in their faces. Some were past suffering, and to occupy the time told of the dangers they had escaped.

For all of them death was certain, close at hand. How many times had they not attempted to force a passage! As for beseeching the victor to grant them conditions, how were they to do so? They did not even know where Hamilcar was to be found.

The wind blew from the direction of the ravine, driving the sand through the portcullis in ceaseless cascades, till the cloaks and the hair of the Barbarians were covered with it as though the earth sought to rise above them and bury them. Nothing stirred; and morning by morning the eternal mountain seemed to them loftier still.

At times a flight of birds sailed swiftly across through the open blue of heaven, in all the freedom of the upper air, and they would close their eyes, that they might not see them.

First came a humming sound in the ears, their nails became black, their bosoms grew chill; then

## Salamambo

they stretched themselves on their sides, and slipped out of existence without a cry.

By the nineteenth day two thousand Asiatics were dead, fifteen hundred of the inhabitants of the Archipelago, eight thousand Libyans, the youngest of the Mercenaries, and whole tribes of natives—in all twenty thousand soldiers, or one half of the army.

Autharitus, whose Gauls now numbered no more than fifty, was about to make an end of it by inducing his comrades to kill him, when, upon the crest of the mountain opposite, he thought he saw a man.

From the height at which he stood the man appeared no bigger than a dwarf. Nevertheless Autharitus discerned a trefoil-shaped shield upon his left arm. "A Carthaginian!" he cried, and everyone in the plain, before the portcullis and at the foot of the rocks, immediately rose to his feet. The soldier was walking along the verge of the precipice, and the Barbarians watched him from below.

Spendius took up the head of an ox; then, having formed a diadem out of a couple of belts, he placed it upon the horns at the end of a pole, in token of their peaceful intentions. The Carthaginian vanished, and they waited.

At last, during the evening, a sword-belt fell suddenly down from aloft like a stone which had broken away from the cliff. It was of red leather, covered with embroidery and set with three diamond stars; in the centre it bore the stamp of the Great Council: a horse beneath a palm tree. This was Hamilcar's reply: a safe conduct.

## The Defile of the Axe

They had nothing to fear; any change in their fortunes meant the end of their sufferings, and under the impulse of a joy that knew no bounds, they embraced one another and wept. Spendius, Autharitus, and Zarxas, four Greeks from the Hellenic colonies in Italy, a negro, and two Spartans volunteered to act as spokesmen and were at once accepted. By what means they were to get out, however, they did not know.

But there came a cracking sound from the direction of the boulders; the topmost of them rocked upon its pivot and then came bounding to the ground below. In fact, although on the Barbarians' side they might be immovable—since it would have been necessary to make them ascend an inclined plane (moreover, they were heaped one upon another owing to the narrowness of the gorge), from the other side, on the contrary, a good shock was sufficient to send them tumbling down. The Carthaginians pushed them over, and by sunrise they extended into the plain like the steps of a huge, ruined staircase.

The Barbarians were still unable to scale them, and ladders were let down. They all rushed upon them, but a discharge from a catapult drove them back; only the Ten were taken.

They marched between the Clinabarians, placing a hand on the crupper of the horse for support. Now that their first delight was over, apprehensions began to arise in their minds; Hamilcar's conditions would be of frightful severity. But Spendius reassured them.

"I will do the talking," he said, and boasted

## Salamambo

that he knew the most effective things to say in order to secure the safety of the army.

Behind every bush they met a sentinel in ambush, and each one bowed respectfully before the sword-belt which Spendius had placed upon his shoulder!

When they reached the Punic camp the crowd came flocking about them, and they heard a sound of whispering and laughter. The door of a tent opened.

At the farther end, upon a stool, sat Hamilcar, beside a low table upon which lay a naked sword. Around him stood some of his captains.

On catching sight of the Barbarians, he started back; then he bent forward to examine them.

Their pupils were dilated to an extraordinary degree, and their eyes surrounded by great black rings which extended to the lobes of their ears; their noses had a bluish tinge, and stood out prominently between hollow cheeks furrowed by deep wrinkles; the skin of their bodies, now too large for their muscles, was covered with slate-coloured dust; their lips adhered to their yellow teeth; they gave forth a noxious odour, and reminded one of half-open tombs—living sepulchres.

In the midst of the tent, on a mat whereon the officers were about to seat themselves, stood a steaming dish of pumpkins. Shivering in every limb, the Barbarians fastened their eyes upon it, and tears came into their eyes. Nevertheless they restrained themselves.

Hamilcar turned round to speak to someone. Thereupon they rushed at it, one and all, throwing themselves flat upon the ground, burying their faces

## The Defile of the Axe

in the dripping, while the sound of swallowing was mingled with sobs of delight. From amazement, doubtless, rather than from pity they were permitted to finish the platter. Then, when they had risen, Hamilcar signified by a nod that the man with the shoulder-belt should speak. Spendius was afraid, and stammered.

As he listened Hamilcar kept turning round upon his finger a heavy ring of gold, the same which had printed the seal of Carthage upon the baldric. He let it fall, and Spendius immediately picked it up; in the presence of a master his servile habits returned. The others trembled with indignation at such meanness.

But the Greek raised his voice and spoke at great length, in a hurried, insidious, and even violent manner, recounting the crimes of Hanno, whom he knew to be Barca's enemy, and trying to excite his pity by giving particulars of their sufferings and reminding him of their devotion; at last, carried away by the warmth of his feelings, he forgot himself.

Hamilcar answered that he accepted their excuses. Peace, therefore, would be concluded, and this time it would be final! But he demanded that ten of the Mercenaries should be given up to him, without their arms and tunics.

They had not expected such leniency. "Oh, twenty, my lord," cried Spendius, "if you will!"

"No! Ten will be enough," replied Hamilcar quietly.

They were taken outside the tent that they might deliberate. No sooner were they alone than



## Salamambo

Autharitus protested against the sacrifice of their comrades, and Zarkas said to Spendius—

“Why did you not kill him? His sword was there, close beside you.”

“Him!” said Spendius; and several times he repeated: “Him! Him!” as though the thing were impossible and Hamilcar of the nature of an immortal.

So overwhelmed were they with lassitude that they stretched themselves on their backs upon the ground, not knowing what resolution to take.

“Spendius exhorted them to yield. At last they consented and re-entered the tent.

Thereupon the Suffete placed his hand in the hand of each Barbarian in turn and pressed their thumbs, afterwards rubbing it upon his clothing, for the touch of their clammy skin occasioned a rough, flabby sensation, a greasy, tingling feeling which made the flesh creep. Then he said to them—

“You are really the chiefs of the Barbarians, and you have sworn for them?”

“Yes!” they replied.

“Of your own free will, from the bottom of your hearts, and with the intention of keeping your promises?”

They assured him that they were going back to the others to carry them out.

“Very well!” replied the Suffete. “According to the covenant agreed upon between me, Barca, and the ambassadors of the Mercenaries, it is you whom I choose, and you whom I keep!”

Spendius fell fainting upon the mat. The Bar-

## The Defile of the Axe

barians, as though forsaking him, drew closer together, without a word or a complaint.

When their waiting comrades did not see them return they believed themselves betrayed. Doubtless the delegates had gone over to the Suffete.

They waited two days longer, and by the morning of the third their minds were made up. With cords, and with pickaxes and arrows arranged like the rungs of a ladder between shreds of cloth, they succeeded in scaling the rocks, and, leaving the weakest, in number about three thousand, behind them, set out to join the army at Tunis.

At the head of the gorge lay a long stretch of grass dotted with sparse shrubs, of which the Barbarians devoured the shoots. Afterwards they discovered a field of beans, and this disappeared as though a cloud of locusts had swept over it. Three hours later they reached a second plateau surrounded by a belt of green knolls.

Between the curves of these hillocks shone silver-coloured sheaves, at some distance from each other; and the Barbarians, dazzled by the sunshine, perceived indistinctly that they were supported by great dark masses underneath them. They rose, opening, as it were, like flowers. They were lances, issuing from towers which were mounted upon elephants clad in terrible armour.

In addition to the spikes upon their chests, their steel-pointed tusks, the brazen plates which covered their sides, and the daggers attached to their knee-pieces, they carried heavy putlasses, the handles of which were confined by leather bands to the ends

## Salammbô

of their trunks; they all started simultaneously from the extremities of the plain, and advanced in parallel lines from either side.

Frozen with a nameless terror, the Barbarians made no attempt to escape. They were surrounded already.

Into this mass of men the elephants forced their way; the spurs upon their chests clove it asunder, the lances upon their tusks turned it over like ploughshares; with the blades upon their trunks they slashed, hewed, and hacked; the towers, full of flaming darts, seemed like moving volcanoes; one could make out nothing save a broad mass, wherein human flesh, pieces of brass, and blood made spots of white, patches of grey, and intricate streaks of red, while the horrible creatures, passing through the midst of it, clove it with dark furrows. The fiercest of all was driven by a Numidian, crowned with a diadem of feathers, who hurled javelins with frightful rapidity, and at intervals gave vent to a long shrill whistle. The huge creatures, tractable as dogs, kept an eye upon him during the carnage.

Little by little the circle of elephants became smaller; the Barbarians, grown feeble, made no resistance, and soon the elephants were in the centre of the plain. There was not room for them; crowded together they rose upon their hind legs, and their tusks came into collision. Suddenly Narr' Havas pacified them, and turning tail they flotted back again towards the hills.

Two syntagmas, however, had taken refuge in a dip of the ground on the right hand, and throwing

## The Defile of the Axe

away their arms, all fell on their knees facing the Punic tents and raised their arms to entreat for mercy. •

They were bound hand and foot, and when they had been laid side by side upon the ground the elephants were brought back.

Their chests gave way with the sound of a box that is smashed; at every step a couple were crushed, and as the animals' great feet sank into their bodies the movement of their haunches made it appear as though they limped. They continued without a pause until the end was reached. •

Once more everything was still over the surface of the plain. Night fell. Hamilcar was delighting in the spectacle of his vengeance, but suddenly he started.

He saw, as did everyone, upon the crest of an eminence six hundred paces to the left, more Barbarians still! In fact, four hundred of the stoutest, Etruscan, Libyan, and Spartan Mercenaries, had at the outset made their way to higher ground, and had remained there in a state of indecision. After the massacre of their comrades they resolved to cut their way through the Carthaginians, and their serried columns were already descending the hill in a marvellous and formidable manner.

Forthwith a herald was despatched to them. The Suffete was in need of soldiers, and would accept them unconditionally, such was his admiration of their courage. They might even, added the man from Carthage, draw somewhat nearer, to a spot which he pointed out, where they would find provisions.

## Salamambo

The Barbarians ran thither and passed the night in eating. Thereupon the Carthaginians broke out into murmurs against the Suffete's partiality for the Mercenaries.

Did he yield to these outbursts of their insatiable hatred, or was it a refinement of perfidy?

On the following day he came himself, without a sword, bareheaded, accompanied by an escort of Clinabarians, and announced that as he had too many mouths to feed he did not intend to keep them. However, since he needed men, and he did not know how to select the best, they were to fight together to the death; afterwards he would admit the victors into his private bodyguard. Such a death was as good as another; and then, parting his troops asunder (for the Punic standards concealed the horizon from the Mercenaries), he showed them the one hundred and ninety-two elephants of Narr' Havas drawn up in one straight line, and brandishing broad steel blades with their trunks, like giant arms holding axes above their heads.

The Barbarians looked at one another in silence. It was not death that made them grow pale, but the horrible necessity to which they found themselves reduced.

Living, as they did, so much in common, profound friendships had been formed between these men. The camp, in most respects, stood to them in the place of their native land; deprived of family ties, their affectionate impulses found an object in one of their companions, and side by side, beneath the same cloak, they would fall asleep in the starlight. Then, in this life of ceaseless wandering through

## The Defile of the Axe

every description of country, and of contact with death and adventure in all their forms, strange affections had come into existence—unlawful bonds no less serious than marriage, wherein the stronger defended the younger in the midst of battle, assisted him to cross the chasm, wiped the sweat of fever from his brow, stole that he might have food, while the other, picked up perchance by the roadside when a child, and now a Mercenary like the rest, recompensed this devotion by a thousand delicate attentions and feminine kindnesses.

They exchanged their necklaces and earrings, presents they had made to one another in former days, in hours of transport after some great danger past. All begged for death, yet none would strike. Here and there a lad might be seen saying to a man whose beard was grey, "No! No, you are the stronger! You will avenge us; kill me!" And the man would answer, "I have fewer years to live! Strike to the heart, and think no more about it!" Brothers, hand locked in hand, gazed into one another's eyes, while friend leaned in tears on the shoulder of friend, bidding him an everlasting farewell.

Breastplates were laid aside that the point of the sword might enter the more easily, and the marks of the great blows they had received for Carthage were exposed to view; like inscriptions upon columns.

They disposed themselves in four equal ranks, after the manner of gladiators, and began by engaging one another in a half-hearted fashion. Some had even bandaged their eyes, so that their blades waved feebly in the air, like a blind man's

## Salammbo

staff. Jeers arose from the Carthaginians, who shouted out that they were cowards. The Barbarians became heated, and soon all were engaged in terrible headlong conflict.

Sometimes a pair of men would stop short, and covered with blood, fall into one another's arms, and die with mutual kisses. None quailed; all rushed upon the proffered blades. So fierce was their frenzy that the Carthaginians, watching at a distance, grew afraid.

At last they paused, their breathing came with a loud stertorous sound from their bosoms, and their eyes were visible amid the long hair which hung about their faces, as though they had bathed in purple dye. Several turned rapidly round and round, where they stood, like panthers wounded in the forehead. Others stood motionless, with their eyes fixed upon a corpse at their feet; then they would suddenly tear their faces with their nails, and seizing their swords in both hands, plunge them into their bowels.

There were still sixty left. They asked for drink. The Carthaginians called out that they must throw aside their weapons, and when they had done so water was brought them.

While they drank, with faces buried in the vessels, sixty Carthaginians leapt upon them and stabbed them with poniards in the back. This Hamilcar did in order to satisfy the instincts of his army, and by this act of treason to inspire it with a personal attachment to himself.

Thus the war was finished, or so at least he believed. Matho would make no resistance, and in

## The Defile of the Axe

his impatience the Suffete at once gave marching orders.

His scouts came to tell him that a convoy had been seen proceeding in the direction of the Lead Mountain. Hamilcar did not concern himself. When once the Mercenaries were crushed, the nomads would give him no further trouble. The one thing of importance was the capture of Tunis, and thither, by long marches, he made his way.

He had sent Narr' Havas to Carthage with the news of his victory, and the king of the Numidians, proud of his success, presented himself at Salammbo's door.

She received him in her gardens, beneath a spreading sycamore tree, reclining among pillows of yellow leather, with Taanach at her side. A white scarf covered her face, and, passing over her mouth and across her forehead, allowed nothing to be seen, save her eyes; but through the transparent fabric her lips shone as brightly as the jewels upon her fingers—for Salammbo kept her two hands enfolded, and made no gesture from beginning to end of their interview.

Narr' Havas informed her of the defeat of the Barbarians, and she thanked him by expressing her gratitude for his services to her father. And then he began to narrate the events of the whole campaign.

The doves cooed softly in the palm trees about them, while other birds fluttered among the grass, collared pratincoles, Tartessian quails and



## Salamambo

Punic guinea-fowls. The garden, long uncultivated, had grown dense with vegetation; the colocynth climbed among the branches of the cassia, the rose gardens were studded with milk-wort, these were wreaths and bowers formed by every description of plant, and here and there, as in the woodland, the slanting rays of sunlight cast the shadow of a leaf upon the ground. The domestic animals, tame no longer, fled at the slightest sound. Sometimes a gazelle might be seen, with some of the scattered peacocks' feathers sticking to his little black hoofs. The noises of the distant town were drowned by the murmur of the waves. The sky was one stretch of unbroken blue; not a sail was visible upon the sea.

Narr' Havas had ceased speaking; Salamambo watched him without replying. He wore a linen robe, painted with flowers, with fringes of gold around the hem; his braided hair was fastened by two silver arrows close to his ears, and with his right hand he leaned against the shaft of a pike, ornamented with rings of electrum and tufts of hair.

As she contemplated him she became engrossed in the vague thoughts that came crowding in upon her. Soft-voiced, feminine in figure, the young man held her gaze captive by his personal charm, and impressed her as an elder sister sent by the Baals for her protection. Suddenly the recollection of Matho came before her, and she could not resist her desire to know what had become of him.

Narr' Havas replied that the Carthaginians were marching upon Tunis in order to take him. As

## The Defile of the Axe

he set forth their chances of success and Matho's weakness she seemed to be tasting the joy of a great hope. Her lips trembled, her bosom heaved. At last he promised that he would kill him with his own hand. "Yes," she cried, "kill him; he *must* be killed!"

The Numidian replied that his death was what he ardently desired, since, the war once over, he would be her husband.

Salamambo started, and hung her head.

But Narr' Havas went on to compare his longings to flowers which droop for want of rain, and to lost travellers who await the dawn. He told her too that she was fairer than the moon, more welcome than the morning breeze or the face of a guest. For her he would send to the country of the Blacks for things unknown at Carthage, and the rooms of their house should be sprinkled with dust of gold.

Evening was falling, balmy odours were distilled upon the air. Long they looked at one another in silence, and Salamambo's eyes, from the depths of her flowing draperies, seemed like twin stars seen through the rift of a cloud. Before the sun had set Narr' Havas retired.

When he withdrew from Carthage the Ancients felt themselves relieved of a great anxiety. The populace had received him with acclamations still more enthusiastic than on the former occasion. If Hamilcar and the king of the Numidians should succeed, unaided, in overcoming the Mercenaries, there would be no resisting them. In order therefore to weaken Barca, they resolved to give some

## Salamambo

share in the deliverance of the Republic to the object of their partiality, the aged Hanno.

He made at once for the western provinces, in order to take his revenge in the very places which had witnessed his shame. But inhabitants and Barbarians were alike dead, concealed, or in flight, and accordingly his rage expended itself upon the country. He burnt the ruins of ruins, leaving behind him not a tree nor a blade of grass. If children or cripples were met with they were put to the torture; women before they were slain were given up to his soldiers, the most comely being attached to his own following; for his terrible disease inflamed him with vehement desire, which he satisfied with the frenzy of a desperate man.

Frequently, upon the ridges of the hills, black tents sank down as though they had been overturned by the wind, and broad discs with shining rims, recognisable as chariot wheels, slowly descended into the valleys with a plaintive creaking sound. The tribes, having abandoned the siege of Carthage, were wandering thus through the provinces, waiting for an opportunity, such as a victory of the Mercenaries, to return. But either from fear or from starvation they all followed the homeward track and disappeared.

Hamilcar was not jealous of Hanno's success. Nevertheless he was anxious to reach the end of his task. He ordered him to turn aside to Tunis, and Hanno, who loved his country, found himself on the day appointed beneath the walls of the town.

The defending force consisted of its indigenous population, twelve thousand Mercenaries and all

## The Defile of the Axe .

the Eaters-of-unclean-things, for they, like Matho, clung to the horizon of Carthage, and both the Schalischim and his horde, as they gazed at her walls from afar, dreamed of the boundless pleasures which lay behind them. Thus at one in their hatred, they speedily organised their resistance. Helmets were fashioned out of water-skins, the palms in the gardens were cut down to form lances, cisterns were dug, and as for provisions, on the borders of the lake they caught great white fish which lived upon corpses and garbage. Their ramparts, left in a state of ruin by reason of the jealousy of Carthage, were so weak that a push with the shoulder would knock them over. Matho stopped up the holes with stones from the houses. It was the final struggle; he had no hope, nevertheless he said to himself that fortune was fickle.

• The Carthaginians, as they drew near, observed upon the ramparts a man so tall that the battlements reached no higher than his waist. The arrows which whistled about him disturbed him no more than a flight of swallows, and not one, as fortune would have it, touched him.

Hamilcar pitched his camp upon the southern side; Narr' Havas, on his right, occupied the plain of Rhades; Hanno the shore of the lake; and the three generals would have to preserve their respective positions in order to make a simultaneous attack upon the defences.

• But Hamilcar, wishing, first of all, to show the Mercenaries that he would chastise them like slaves, had the ten ambassadors crucified, close

## Salamambo

together, upon a knoll facing the town. The besieged, at this spectacle, abandoned the rampart.

Matho had said to himself that if he could only pass between the wall and the tents of Narr' Havas before the Numidians had the time to come out, he would fall upon the rear of the Carthaginian infantry, which would thus find itself caught between his division and the forces within the town. Forth, then, he rushed, accompanied by his veterans.

Narr' Havas perceived him, and crossing the shore of the lake, told Hanno that he ought to send men to Hamilcar's assistance. Did he imagine that Barca was too weak to resist the Mercenaries? Was it perfidy or stupidity? No one ever knew.

Hanno, in his desire to humiliate his rival, did not hesitate. He shouted an order to sound the advance, and his army charged headlong upon the Barbarians. But their opponents, turning round, rushed straight at the Carthaginians, struck them down, trampled them beneath their feet, and driving them before them reached the tent of Hanno, who was then within, with thirty Carthaginians, the most distinguished of the Ancients, about him.

• He seemed thunderstruck at their audacity, and called upon his officers. But the Barbarians, shouting insults at him, thrust their fists in his face. The crowd hustled one another, and those who had their hands upon him had the greatest difficulty in retaining their hold. Meanwhile he kept trying to whisper in their ears: "I will give you anything you like! I am rich! Save me!" They dragged

## The Defile of the Axe

him along, and heavy as he was his feet no longer touched the ground. The Ancients had been taken away. His fright increased twofold. "You have beaten me! I am your prisoner! I will pay my ransom! Listen, my friends!" And borne up by the crowd of shoulders which crushed against his sides, he kept repeating: "What are you going to do? What do you want? I am not obstinate, you can see! I always was good-natured."

A gigantic cross was erected at the door. "Here! Here!" yelled the Barbarians, but he raised his voice still higher, and in the name of their Gods demanded to be taken to the Schalischim, for whose ear he had information upon which their safety depended.

They stopped, and some maintained that it would be wise to call Matho. They went to find him.

Hanno sank down upon the grass, and around him he saw yet other crosses, as though the torture under which he was to perish had multiplied beforehand; he struggled to convince himself that he was mistaken—that there was but one, and even to believe that there were none at all. At last they raised him.

"Speak!" said Matho.

He offered to betray Hamilcar; then they would enter Carthage and both become kings.

With a sign to the others that they should make haste, Matho went away. It was merely, he thought, a ruse to gain time.

The Barbarian was wrong; Hanno had reached

## Salamambo

the desperate position in which one no longer considers anything, and such, moreover, was his loathing of Hamilcar that the faintest hope of safety would have induced him to sacrifice the Suffete and all his soldiers.

On the ground, beneath the thirty crosses, lay the Ancients, faint with fear; cords had already been passed beneath their armpits. At that the old Suffete wept, understanding that death was inevitable.

They tore off such garments as he had left, and the hideousness of his person became apparent. The nameless mass was covered with ulcers; the nails of his feet were hidden by the swellings upon his legs; greenish scraps were hanging upon his fingers, and the tears which streamed between the tubercles on his cheeks gave to his face an aspect of frightful dejection, and seemed to occupy more space than upon another human countenance. His royal diadem, partially detached, trailed among his white locks in the dust.

Considering that they had no ropes sufficiently strong to raise him to the top of the cross, they nailed him thereto in the Punic fashion before it was raised. But under his sufferings his pride came back. He began to load them with abuse. He foamed and writhed like a sea-monster being slaughtered on the shore, prophesying that they would come to an end more horrible still and that he would be avenged.

He was. Long flames, interspersed with columns of smoke, were now bursting from the town, and on the opposite side the ambassadors of the Mercenaries were in the throes of death.

## The Defile of the Axe

Some, who at first had lost consciousness, had revived beneath the coolness of the breeze; but they remained with their chins on their breasts, and their bodies, in spite of the nails which fixed their arms above the level of their heads, had slipped down; blood was dripping slowly from their hands and feet, as the ripe fruit falls from the branches of a tree, and all about them Carthage, the gulf, the mountains and the plains seemed to revolve like a mighty wheel. Sometimes a cloud of dust would rise from the ground and wrap them in its folds; they were parched with frightful thirst, their tongues curled in their mouths, and over their bodies, as their souls took flight, ran streams of icy sweat.

Meanwhile, from an infinite depth beneath them, they caught glimpses of streets, of tramping soldiers, and waving swords, while the din of battle came vaguely to their ears, like the sound of the sea to shipwrecked mariners dying in the shrouds of their vessel. The Italian Greeks, hardier than the rest, were shrieking still; the Spartans kept their eyelids closed and uttered no sound; Zarxas, once so full of vigour, drooped like a broken reed; beside him hung the Ethiopian with his head thrown backwards over the arm of the cross; Autharitus, motionless otherwise, rolled his eyes; his luxuriant hair, caught in a crevice of the wood, rose straight upwards from his forehead, and the death rattle which issued from his throat seemed more like a roar of rage. To Spendius a strange courage had come; certain, now, that he was on the verge of eternal emancipation, he regarded life with contempt and awaited death without emotion.



## Salamambo

Half-unconscious as they were, at times they started to find their lips brushed by the sweep of passing feathers. The shadows of great wings hovered about them, harsh croakings sounded abruptly in the air, and, as the cross of Spendius was the highest, it was upon his that the first vulture alighted. He turned his face to Autharitus, saying slowly, with a smile impossible to describe—

"Do you remember the lions on the road to Sicca?"

"They were our brothers!" replied the Gaul as he expired.

Meanwhile the Suffete had opened a breach in the fortifications, and had reached the citadel. Beneath a gust of wind the smoke suddenly lifted, revealing the horizon up to the walls of Carthage; he even fancied that he could distinguish the watchers on the platform of the temple of Eschmoun; then, as his eyes travelled back, he perceived thirty huge crosses upon the shore of the lake, to the left.

In fact, to make them still more terrible, they had constructed them of tent-poles bound end to end, and the thirty corpses of the Ancients appeared far aloft in the sky. On their bosoms were objects resembling white butterflies—the feathers of the arrows which had been shot at them from below.

At the top of the largest shone a broad ribbon of gold; it hung down upon the victim's shoulder; the arm was missing on that side, and it was with difficulty that Hamilcar recognised Hanno. His soft, porous bones had given way, under the iron

## The Defile of the Axe

spikes, portions of his limbs had fallen away, and nothing was now left upon the cross save shapeless fragments, like the remains of animals suspended to the Hunter's door.

The Suffete had had no opportunity of learning the news: the town, in front of him, concealed everything that was beyond and behind it, and the officers who had been sent one after another to the two generals had not reappeared. Then came fugitives, with stories of the rout, and the Punic army came to a halt. Such a catastrophe, coming as it did in the midst of their victory, filled them with consternation. They no longer heard Hamilcar's orders.

Matho, taking advantage of this, continued his ravages among the Numidians. Hanno's camp having been demolished, he had returned to attack them. The elephants came on, but the Mercenaries, with brands torn from the walls, advanced across the plain waving flames before them, and the huge creatures, rushing in terror to the gulf, killed one another as they floundered about in the water, or were drowned beneath the weight of their armour. Narr' Havas had already launched his cavalry against the Mercenaries, but they all threw themselves flat upon the ground; then, when the horses were but three paces from them, they sprang up beneath their bellies, ripping them open with daggers, and when Barca arrived upon the scene half the Numidians had perished.

The Mercenaries, exhausted, could not withstand his troops, and retired in good order to the Mountain of the Hot Springs. The Suffete was so prudent

## Salamambo

as not to pursue them. He made for the mouths of the Macar.

Tunis was his, but it was now nothing more than an accumulation of smoking rubbish. The ruins extended through the breaches in the walls down into the midst of the plain, and in the distance, between the shores of the gulf, the carcasses of the elephants, driven by the breeze, were knocking together in the water like an archipelago of black rocks afloat.

To carry on the war Narr' Havas had exhausted his forests, taking young and old, males and females alike, and the military power of his kingdom was now beyond repair. The people, who had watched their destruction from a distance, were overwhelmed with distress, and men bewailed their loss in the streets, calling them by their names like dead friends of their own: "Ah, Invincible! Victory! Thunderer! Swallow!" On the first day, moreover, their talk was all of their dead fellow-citizens, but on the morrow they perceived the tents of the Mercenaries on the Mountain of the Hot Springs. Then such was the depth of their despair that many, especially among the women, cast themselves headlong down from the summit of the Acropolis.

• What were Hamilcar's plans no one knew. He lived alone in his tent with no companion save a young lad, nor did anyone ever join them at their meals, not even Narr' Havas. Since Hanno's defeat, however, he treated him with singular consideration; but so deeply was the king of the Numidians interested in becoming his son that he could not fail to mistrust it.

## The Defile of the Axe

This inactivity was but the veil for skilful manœuvres. Hamilcar employed every variety of artifice to beguile the chiefs of the villages, and the Mercenaries were driven away, repulsed, and hunted down like wild beasts. No sooner did they enter a wood than the trees caught fire about them; if they drank from a spring, it was poisoned; and the caves in which they concealed themselves in order to sleep were walled up. Tribes who had hitherto defended them or acted in complicity with them now pursued them, and among these bands they always detected Carthaginian armour.

The faces of several were ravaged by a red eruption, which they had caught, they believed, by touching Hanno. Others fancied that it was caused by their having eaten the fish of Salamambo, and far from repenting of it, they meditated acts of sacrilege more hateful still, that the Punic Gods might be more thoroughly humbled. They would have exterminated them with delight.

Thus for three long months they wandered along the eastern coast, skirting finally the rear of Mount Selloum till they reached the sands on the border of the desert. They sought a harbour of refuge, no matter where. Utica and Hippo-Zarytus were the only places that had not played them false, but Hamilcar held both towns surrounded. Then they returned northward, as chance led them, without knowing the roads, their brains being disordered by reason of their hardships.

Their only feeling was one of steadily growing exasperation; and one day they found themselves again among the gorges of the Cobus—once more before Carthage!

## Salamambo

Then engagements became more frequent. Fortune inclined neither to one side nor to the other, but both were now so weary that they longed for a great battle in place of these skirmishes, provided it were really the last.

Matho wished to carry such a proposal to the Suffete, in person. One of his Libyans<sup>t</sup> devoted himself to the purpose, and all, as they watched him depart, were convinced that he would never come back.

He returned the same evening.

‘Hamilcar accepted their challenge. They would join battle at sunrise on the following day in the plain of Rhades.

The Mercenaries wanted to know whether he had said anything more.

‘As I did not go away,” continued the Libyan, “he asked me what I was waiting for. ‘To be killed!’ I replied. And he answered, ‘No! Take yourself off! That is for to-morrow, along with the rest.’”

This act of generosity amazed the Barbarians; some it terrified, and Matho regretted that his messenger had not been killed.

\* He still had with him three thousand Africans, twelve hundred Greeks, fifteen hundred Campanians, two hundred Iberians, four hundred Etruscans, five hundred Samnites, forty Gauls, and a troop of Naffur, nomad robbers met with in the date-country, in all seven thousand two hundred and nineteen soldiers, but, not a single complete syntagma. They had repaired the holes in their

## The Defile of the Axe

cuirasses with the shoulder-blades of quadrupeds, and replaced their brazen cothurni by sandals made of rags. Their garments were weighed down with plates of copper or iron; their coats of mail hung from them in tatters, and scars like threads of purple were visible amid the hair upon their arms and faces.

As a reinforcement of their energies, the wrath of their dead comrades came back to their recollection and entered into their souls; they felt in a vague way that they were the ministers of a god who was shed abroad in the hearts of the oppressed—the priests, as it were, of universal vengeance! Maddened, moreover, by the sting of an injustice which knew no bounds and by the sight of Carthage upon the horizon, they swore an oath to fight for one another unto death.

They killed the beasts of burden and ate as much as possible in order to gain strength, and afterwards they slept. Some prayed, with faces directed towards various constellations.

The first to arrive in the plain were the Carthaginians. They smeared the edges of their shields with oil to make the arrows turn aside the more easily; the foot-soldiers, who wore their hair long, cut it short upon their foreheads, for prudent sake; and Hamilcar, knowing the disadvantage of fighting upon a full stomach, had all platters overturned at the fifth watch. His army amounted to fourteen thousand men, or about twice the number of the Barbarians; yet never had he felt so much anxiety; defeat meant

## Salamambo

annihilation for the Republic and for himself death by crucifixion; if on the contrary he should win the day, he would make his way to Italy by way of the Pyrenees, the Gallic provinces, and the Alps, and the ascendancy of the house of Barca would be established for ever. Twenty times during the night he rose to see with his own eyes that everything, down to the most trifling detail, was in order. As for the Carthaginians, they were exasperated by the long period of terror they had passed through.

Narr' Havas was doubtful of the loyalty of his Numidians. Besides, the Barbarians might overcome them. A singular weakness had taken hold of him; he kept constantly drinking large cups of water.

But a man whom he did not know opened his tent and placed upon the ground a crown of rock-salt, ornamented with sacerdotal designs in sulphur and diamond-shaped pieces of mother-of-pearl; an affianced bride would sometimes send her prospective husband the marriage crown as a proof of love, a kind of invitation.

Yet the daughter of Hamilcar had no tender feelings for Narr' Havas.

The thought of Matho was an intolerable burden to her; she felt as though her mind could only recover its freedom through his death, just as to cure the bite of a viper one crushes the serpent on the wound. The king of the Numidians was at her mercy; he was patiently awaiting the wedding ceremony, and since it was to take place when victory had been achieved, Salamambo sent him this

## The Defile of the Axe

present to stimulate his courage. Thereupon his distress vanished, and he thought of nothing but the delight of possessing so beautiful a bride.

The same vision beset Matho, but he promptly thrust it aside, and the love which he trod under foot went out towards his comrades in arms. He clung to them as though they had been portions of his own person, of his own hatred; he felt his spirit rise higher, his arms grow stronger, and clearly he saw before him all that he had to carry through. If at times a sigh escaped him, it was because his thoughts were of Spendius.

He drew up the Barbarians in six equal ranks. The Etruscans, bound together by a chain of bronze, he placed in the centre, the archers occupied the rear, while the Naffur, mounted on short-haired camels covered with ostrich plumes, were distributed upon the wings.

The Suffete arranged the Carthaginians in similar order. The Clinabarians he placed outside the infantry, close to the velites, and beyond them the Numidians; thus, when the day broke, the two forces found themselves drawn up in line face to face. All watched one another, from a distance, with great wild eyes. At first there was some hesitation, but at length both armies began to move.

The Barbarians, that they might not lose their breath, advanced but slowly, marking time with their feet; the centre of the Punic army formed a convex curve. Then broke forth the sound of a terrible shock, like the report of two fleets coming into collision. The first rank of the Barbarians



## Salamambo

speedily opened out, and the marksmen, from their sheltered position in the rear, discharged their balls, arrows, and javelins. Gradually, however, the curve of the Carthaginian line flattened itself out; it became quite straight, then bent inwards, and the two sections of velites drew together in parallel lines like the legs of a compass as it closes. The Barbarians, in the fury of their assault upon the phalanx, were entering the cleft within it to their own destruction. Matho drew them back, and as the Carthaginians' wings continued to advance, he caused the three inner ranks of his line to pass outwards; soon they extended beyond his flanks, and his army presented a long line three deep.

But the Barbarians stationed at the ends of the line happened to be the weakest, especially those upon the left, who had emptied their quivers, and the troop of velites, when at length they came to close quarters, handled them severely.

Matho made them fall back. His right wing included some Campanians armed with axes; these he hurled upon the Carthaginian left, the centre was prosecuting the attack, and those at the other end of the line, now out of danger, kept the velites in check.

Then Hamilcar divided his horsemen into squadrons, placed hoplites between them, and launched them against the Barbarians.

These conical masses presented a front of horses, while their broader sides were dense with bristling lances. It was impossible for the Barbarians to resist them; none but the Greek infantry had brass armour, the rest carried such

## The Defile of the Axe

weapons as a cutlass at the end of a pole, a scythe taken from a farm, or a sword manufactured out of the felloe of a wheel; their soft blades bent with every blow, and while they were occupied in straightening them beneath their feet the Carthaginians had no difficulty in cutting them down right and left.

But the Etruscans, firmly bound to their chain, stood their ground; the bodies of those who were dead, prevented from falling, obstructed the enemy's advance, and by turns the great bronze line stretched out and drew in, supple as a serpent, immovable as a wall. The Barbarians sought refuge behind it in order to re-form their ranks, and after a minute's breathing space returned to the attack, with the broken fragments of their weapons in their hands.

Many, who were already disarmed, leapt upon the Carthaginians and bit them in the face like dogs. The Gauls, out of bravado, laid aside their cloaks, rendering their stalwart white bodies visible from afar, while they tore their wounds open in order to frighten the enemy. Amid the Punic syntagmas the voice of the crier proclaiming the orders could no longer be heard, the signals given by the standards which rose above the dust had to be repeated, and everyone was swept hither and thither by the swaying of the mighty throng about him.

Hamilcar commanded the Numidians to advance, but the Nafur rushed to meet them.

Clothed in immense black robes, with a tuft of hair on the crown of their heads and a

## Salamambo

shield of rhinoceros hide, they wielded a handleless blade retained by a cord, while their camels, bristling with plumes, uttered a hoarse, prolonged clucking. Each blade descended with perfect accuracy, then flew sharply back, carrying a limb away with it. The furious creatures went galloping through the syntagmas, some, with broken legs, hopping like wounded ostriches. . .

Back upon the Barbarians came the entire mass of Punic infantry, cutting their ranks into fragments. Their maniples, now separate from each other, kept eddying round and round, while the brighter arms of the Carthaginians encircled them like crowns of gold. The motion of the centre was like that of a swarm of bees, and the sun, smiting the sword-points, tipped them with dancing gleams of white.

But some of the Mercenaries, tearing the armour from the files of Clinabarians stretched upon the plain, put it on and returned to the fight. The Carthaginians, deceived, several times plunged among them; then, stupefied, remained motionless, or else surged back, and the shouts of triumph which arose in the distance drove them headlong like wreckage before the storm. Hamilcar began to despair; before the genius of Matho and the invincible courage of the Mercenaries, all, it seemed, would be lost. . .

But on the horizon there burst forth a mighty sound of tambourines. A multitude of old men, sick, children of fifteen and even women, no longer able to endure the tortures of suspense, had set forth from Carthage, and in order to secure some-

## The Defile of the Axe

thing formidable in the way of a protector, had taken from Hamilcar's palace the only elephant now possessed by the Republic—the one whose trunk had been cut off.

Then it seemed to the Carthaginians that the Motherland, forsaking her walls, had come forth to bid them die in her behalf. A twofold access of fury took possession of them, and the impetuous advance of the Numidians carried all the others with them.

The Barbarians had set their backs against a low hill in the midst of the plain. They had no chance of victory, or even of surviving the conflict, but these were the best, the most dauntless, the most stalwart of them all.

Above the heads of the Numidians the throng from Carthage began to hurl cooking-spits, larding-pins, and hammers, and those who had made consuls tremble died from the blows of cudgels thrown by women; it was the populace of Carthage that incited her Mercenaries.

They had taken refuge upon the summit of the hill; at every fresh breach their circle closed its ranks; twice it made a descent, only to be immediately driven back by a charge; with arms outstretched the disorderly array of Carthaginians thrust their pikes between the legs of their comrades and stabbed blindly before them. They slipped upon blood; the corpses, owing to the steepness of the slope, kept rolling down, till they rose to the height of the elephant's belly as it strove to climb the hill; it seemed to delight in sprawling upon them, and its shortened trunk, with

## Salammbo

its broad extremity, rose up from time to time like a huge leech.

Then all came to a halt, and the Carthaginians, grinding their teeth, surveyed the top of the hill where the Barbarians stood.

At length they rushed forward with a sudden charge, and the fray began anew. Often the Mercenaries would allow them to approach, calling out that they wished to surrender; then, with terrible, mocking laughter, they killed themselves with a single blow, and as they fell dead others mounted upon their bodies to continue the defence.

Before long there were but fifty of them left, then twenty, then three, then two: a Samnite armed with an axe, and Matho who still retained his sword.

The Samnite, bending low, swung his axe alternately to right and to left, warning Matho meanwhile of the blows that were aimed against him: "Here, master! Now there! Stoop down!"

Matho had lost his shoulder-pieces, his helmet, and his breastplate; he was absolutely naked—more livid than the dead, with hair erect and two patches of foam at the corners of his lips—and so rapid was the whirling of his sword that it made a luminous circle about him. A stone broke it off close to the hilt, the Samnite was slain, and the flood of Carthaginians closed in until they touched him. Then he raised his two empty hands to heaven, closed his eyes, and opening wide his arms like a man who from the summit of a headland casts himself into the sea, leapt forward among the pikes.

## The Defile of the Axe

They gave way before him. Again and again he rushed upon the Carthaginians; they always fell back and turned their weapons aside.

His foot struck against a sword. He sought to grasp it, found himself caught by the hands and knees, and fell.

For some time Narr' Havas had been following him step by step, with one of the large nets used to snare wild animals, and when he stooped had seized the opportunity and enveloped him in it.

Then they bound him upon the elephant with his four limbs crosswise, and all who were not wounded formed an escort about him, and rushed in a tumultuous throng towards Carthage.

News of the victory, strange as it seemed, had reached the city by the third hour of the night; the water-clock of Khamon had marked the fifth on their arrival at Malqua, and thereupon Matho opened his eyes. So numerous were the lights about the houses that the entire city seemed aflame.

Vaguely a mighty uproar reached his ears, and stretched upon his back he watched the stars.

Then a door closed, and he was wrapped in darkness.

At the same hour on the morrow, the last of the men left in the Defile of the Axe expired.

On the day when their comrades went away some of the Zuæces on their way home had overthrown the rocks and had provided them with nourishment for a time.

The Barbarians were always expecting Matho to appear, and from despondency, languor and

## Salamambo

that obstinacy with which the sick refuse to be moved, they would not leave the mountain; at last, the provisions being exhausted, the Zuaces went away. The Carthaginians knew that there were barely thirteen hundred of them left and there was no need to employ soldiers to destroy them.

During the three years over which the war had extended wild beasts, and especially lions, had multiplied. Narr' Havas had driven them together in great numbers, then, having tethered goats at intervals along the track, had borne down upon them and swept them towards the Defile of the Axe, where they were all living when the man sent by the Ancients to find out what was left of the Barbarians reached the spot.

Lions and corpses were distributed throughout the extent of the plain, the dead being indistinguishable from the clothes and the armour. Almost all had lost either the face or an arm; some appeared to be still uninjured; others were completely withered up, their helmets tenanted only by skulls covered with dust; there were greaves with fleshless feet projecting from them, and skeletons still wrapped in their cloaks, while bones scoured clean by the sun made shining spots amid the sand.

The lions, resting on their bosoms, with their two paws outstretched, lay blinking in the brilliant sunshine, rendered all the more dazzling by reflection from the white rocks. Others, seated on their haunches, stared steadily before them, or

## The Defile of the Axe

else, half hidden beneath their huge manes, lay curled up asleep, all alike with the same air of satiety, fatigue, and listless weariness, motionless as the mountain and the dead. Night fell, and the western sky was streaked with broad bands of red.

From one of the heaps which formed an irregular series of hummocks about the plain there arose something more shadowy than a spectre. Then one of the lions put himself in motion, his monstrous shape forming a dark shadow against the purple background of the sky; when he was quite close to the man he knocked him over with a single blow from his paw.

Stretched upon his victim, he slowly drew forth his entrails with the points of his fangs.

Then, with jaws opened to their fullest extent, he uttered a prolonged roar which, lasting for some minutes, was repeated by the mountain echoes till at length it died away amid the solitude.

Suddenly small pebbles came rolling down from above. There was a pattering rush of rapid footsteps; sharp muzzles and erect ears were visible in the neighbourhood of the portcullis and the gorge, with the flash of tawny eyeballs. The jackals were coming to devour the remains.

The Carthaginian, who was leaning over the verge of the precipice to watch, turned homewards.



## XV

### MATHO

THERE was joy at Carthage; joy profound, universal, unbounded, frantic; the gaps in the ruins had been repaired, the statues of the Gods repainted, the streets were strewn with branches of myrtle, incense smoked at the corners of the crossways, and the motley costumes of the throng upon the terraces were like masses of flowers blossoming in the open air.

Above the perpetual shrill clatter of voices rose the cry of the water-carriers as they watered the pavement; slaves belonging to Hamilcar were offering, on his behalf, roasted barley and portions of cooked meat; people accosted one another and embraced with tears; the Tyrian cities were captured, the Nomads dispersed, all the Barbarians destroyed. The Acropolis was hidden beneath awnings of various colours; the beaks of the triremes, drawn up in a line beyond the mole, shone like a barrier of diamonds; on every hand one was conscious of order restored, of the commencement of a new existence, the diffusion of a mighty happiness: it was the day of the wedding of Salamambo with the king of the Numidians.

On the terrace of the temple of Khâmon were

## Matho

three long tables loaded with enormous pieces of plate : at these the Priests, the Ancients, and the Rich were to sit, and higher still there was a fourth, for Hamilcar, Narr' Havas and his bride ; for since Sálammbo, by the restoration of the zaimph, had saved the country, the people treated her wedding as an occasion for national rejoicing, and were waiting, in the square below, for her appearance.

But their impatience was stimulated by another and more intense desire : the death of Matho had been promised for the ceremony.

At first it had been proposed to flay him alive, to pour lead into his entrails, or to let him starve to death ; again, they might bind him to a tree and let an ape knock him on the head from behind with a stone ; it was Tanit whom he had offended, and thus the apes of Tanit would avenge her. Others were of opinion that he ought to be driven about upon a dromedary with wisps of flax soaked in oil inserted in various parts of his body ; they revelled in the notion of the great creature wandering through the streets with its human burden writhing beneath the flames like a candelabrum blown about by the wind.

But which of the citizens should be entrusted with his punishment, and why should the rest be balked of it ? What was desired was some kind of death in which the entire city could share, so that every hand, weapon, and thing in Carthage, down to the very stones of the streets and the waters of the gulf, could vend him, crush him, and annihilate him. Accordingly the Ancients decided that he should proceed from his prison to the square of

## Salamambo

Khamon, unaccompanied, and with his arms bound behind his back; in order that he might live the longer, it was forbidden to strike him to the heart; that he might see so long as his torture lasted, it was forbidden to put out his eyes, nor was anyone permitted to throw anything at him, or to touch him with more than three fingers at a time. \* \* :

Though he was not to appear until the close of the day, people sometimes thought they caught sight of him, and the crowd, leaving the streets empty, rushed towards the Acropolis only to return with prolonged murmurs. Some, who had remained standing in the same spot ever since the preceding evening, shouted remarks to one another from a distance, and exhibited their nails, which they had allowed to grow that they might bury them the deeper in his flesh. Others walked excitedly to and fro, while some were as pale as though they had been awaiting their own execution.

All at once, beyond the Mappalia, tall, fanlike plumes rose above the heads of the people. Salamambo was leaving her palace. A sigh of relief broke forth.

But the cortège was long in coming; it proceeded at a foot-pace.

The first to file past were the priests of the Pataci, followed by those of Eschmoun, those of Melkarth, and all the other colleges in succession, bearing the same insignia and observing the same order as on the occasion of the sacrifice. The pontiff of Moloch went by with bowed heads, and from a sort of remorse the multitude drew back before them. But the priests of Rabetna came proudly on with lyres

## Matho

in their hands, followed by the priestesses, in black or yellow robes of transparent material, uttering the cries of birds, writhing like vipers, or else, in imitation of the dance of the stars, whirling round to the sound of flutes, while their light draperies distributed whiffs of soft fragrance through the streets. Specially applauded among these women were the Kedeschim with their painted eyelids, who, similarly clothed and perfumed, resembled the women in spite of their flat bosoms and narrower hips, and symbolised the dual nature of the divinity. To-day, moreover, the female principle swayed and commingled all things; a mysterious wantonness was abroad in the heavy air; already the torches were being lit in the recesses of the sacred groves, where an orgie would take place during the night, three vessels having arrived with courtesans from Sicily, while the desert would also contribute its share.

As they reached the spot the corporations of priests took up their stations in the courts of the temple, on the exterior galleries and along the two staircases which ascended the walls outside and converged towards the top. Ranks of white robes were visible between the colonnades, and the architecture was peopled with human statues, motionless as statues of stone.

Next came the superintendents of finance, the provincial governors and all the Rich. Down below a mighty uproar was going on; the crowd was pouring from the neighbouring streets, slaves of the temple were driving them back with blows from their staves, while seated in a litter sur-

## • Salammbo

mounted by a purple daïs, and surrounded by the Ancients crowned with tiaras of gold, Salammbo was to be seen.

Then uprose a mighty shout; louder still grew the sounds of cymbal and castanet, tambourines thundered, and the great purple daïs vanished between the two vestibules.

It reappeared upon the first story. Salammbo was walking slowly beneath it; she passed across the terrace in order to take her seat at the back upon a kind of throne carved out of the shell of a tortoise. Beneath her feet was placed an ivory stool with three steps; two negro children were kneeling at the edge of the lowest, and from time to time she rested her arms, laden with a weight of heavy rings, upon their heads.

From ankles to hips she was clad in a closely fitting network of narrow links, glittering like mother-of-pearl and designed to imitate the scales of a fish; her waist was encircled by a bright blue girdle with two crescent-shaped slits which revealed her breasts, their nipples being hidden by pendants of carbuncles. Her head-dress was of peacocks' feathers studded with jewels; behind her trailed a flowing mantle, white as snow, and with elbows held close to her body, knees pressed tightly together, and hoops of diamonds encircling the upper part of each arm, she sat rigidly erect in a sacerdotal attitude.

Two lower seats were occupied by her father and her husband. Narr' Havas, clad in a light-coloured simar, wore his crown of rock salt, with two projecting braids of hair, twisted like the

## Matho

horns of Ammon; while Hamilcar, in a violet tunic figured in gold with sprays of vine, kept a sword of battle by his side.

In the space enclosed by the tables, the python of the temple of Eschmoun, lying tail in mouth upon the ground among pools of rose-coloured oil, described a great black circle. In the midst of it rose a pillar of copper supporting a crystal egg, which, smitten by the sun, launched rays of light in all directions.

Rank after rank, behind Salammbo, stretched the linen-robed priests of Tanit; on her right the tiaras of the Ancients formed a long line of gold, and on her left the emerald sceptres of the Rich a long line of green, while in the remote background, where the priests of Moloch were marshalled, stood a wall, so it seemed, of purple, formed by their mantles. The other colleges occupied the lower terraces. The multitude crowded the streets, rising to the tops of the houses and extending in long files to the summit of the Acropolis. With the people thus at her feet, the firmament above her head, and about her the limitless sea, the gulf, the mountains, and the distant prospect of the provinces, Salammbo in her glory seemed blended with Tanit, as though she were the very spirit of Carthage, the embodiment of her soul.

The banquet was to last throughout the night, and many-branched lamp-sconces were planted like trees upon the painted woollen coverings which concealed the low tables. Great flagons of electrum, jars of blue grass, tortoise-shell spoons, and round

## Salamambo

rolls of bread were crowded together between the two rows of pearl-bordered plates; bunches of grapes were twined, thyrsus-like, upon stems of ivory; masses of snow were melting upon ebony trays; there were mounds of lemons, pomegranates, pumpkins, and water-melons beneath the tall pieces of silver plate; boars with open jaws wallowed in the powdered spices; hares, still clothed in their fur, seemed to gambol among the flowers; there were shells filled with mixtures of different meats, the pastry was fashioned in symbolical forms, and doves flew away when the dish-covers were removed.

Meanwhile slaves with their tunics tucked up were moving about on tiptoe; from time to time the lyres gave forth a hymn, or else a chorus of voices arose. The hum of the people, ceaseless as the murmur of the sea, floated vaguely about the feast, and seemed to lull it with a fuller harmony; some called to mind the banquet of the Mercenaries; dreams of happiness prevailed; the sun was beginning to decline, and already the crescent moon was rising in the opposite quarter of the heavens.

But Salamambo turned her head as though someone had called her, and the people, with their gaze fixed upon her, followed the direction of her eyes.

The door of the dungeon, cut out of the rock at the foot of the temple on the summit of the Acropolis, had just opened, and upon the threshold stood a man framed in the darkness of the aperture.

Forth he came, bent double, with the bewildered air of a wild animal suddenly set at liberty.

Dazzled by the light, for some time he stood motionless, and all, recognising him, held their

## Matho

breath. The body of this victim was for them a thing by itself, dignified with an almost religious lustre. They leaned forward to see him, especially the women, who were impatient to look upon the man who had done their children and husbands to death; in spite of themselves there arose from the depth of their souls a shameful curiosity—the desire to know him completely, a longing mingled with remorse and turning to still fiercer loathing.

At length he stepped forward, and the bewilderment of surprise vanished. A multitude of arms were raised, and he was no longer to be seen.

The steps leading up to the Acropolis were sixty in number. He came down them as though swept away by a torrent from a mountain height; three times he was seen bounding onward, and at the bottom he landed on both feet.

His shoulders were bleeding, his bosom heaved with convulsive panting, and such were his struggles to break his bonds that his arms, which lay crossed upon his naked back, swelled like the sections of a snake.

At the spot where he stood several streets diverged before him. In each a triple row of bronze chains attached to the navels of the Dii Patæci ran parallel to one another from end to end: the crowd was massed against the houses, and the servants of the Ancients walked up and down in the midst waving their lashes.

With a great blow one of them drove him forward, and Matho began to advance.

The people stretched their arms out over the chains, shouting that he had been allowed too broad



## Salamambo

a path, and prodded, spurred, and gashed by the multitude of fingers, he kept on his way ; at the end of one street another appeared ; several times he flung himself to one side in order to bite them ; they sprang hastily apart, the chains kept him back, and the crowd burst into laughter.

A child rent his ear ; a girl split his cheek open with a distaff hidden in her sleeve ; some tore out handfuls of his hair or shreds of flesh from his body, while others held sponges saturated with filth at the ends of sticks and thrust them in his face. A stream of blood spurted from the right side of his throat, and forthwith they broke into frenzy. For them this last of the Barbarians was the representative of them all, of their entire army, and upon him they avenged themselves for their disasters, their terrors, and their shame. With its gratification the popular wrath increased ; the overstrained chains curved outwards till they were on the point of breaking ; the people were insensible to the blows showered upon them by the slaves in order to drive them back ; some were clinging to the projections of the houses ; every opening in the walls was crowded with heads, and the injuries they could not inflict upon his person they shouted in his ears.

They loaded him with foul and outrageous insults, accompanied by ironical encouragement and by curses ; unappeased by his present sufferings, they assigned him others yet more terrible for eternity.

All Carthage was filled with this mighty yapping, which continued with stupid persistence. Frequently a single syllable would be repeated during several

## Matho

minutes by the entire populace with a hoarse, deep, frenzied intonation that shook the walls from base to summit ; while to Matho it seemed as though the two sides of the street were coming towards him and raising him from the ground, like two huge arms which should strangle him in mid-air.

Yet he recollected having once before undergone a somewhat similar experience. There was the same crowd upon the terraces, the same looks, the same wrath ; but then he walked in freedom, all gave way before him, he was under the protection of a God ; and the recollection, gradually becoming more distinct, brought him a crushing sadness. Shadows passed before his eyes ; the city whirled round and round in his brain, the blood was pouring from a wound at his hip, he felt that he was dying ; his knees gave way, and he sank down quite gently on the pavement.

From the peristyle of the temple of Melkarth someone fetched the bar of a tripod heated red-hot by coals, and slipping it under the first chain, pressed it against his wound. One could see the flesh smoke ; the jeers of the populace drowned his voice ; again he was upon his legs.

Six paces farther on he fell again, and a third and yet a fourth time he fell ; always some fresh torture brought him to his feet. Drops of boiling oil were discharged at him through tubes ; pieces of broken glass were strewn beneath his feet, yet still he walked on. Beneath the porch of a shop at the corner of the street of Satheb he leaned his back against the wall and advanced no farther.

With their whips of hippopotamus hide the slaves

## Salammbo

of the Council lashed him so long and so furiously that the fringes of their tunics were bathed in sweat. Matho appeared to be insensible; then all at once he bounded forward and ran on at random, while from his lips there issued the sound made by those who shiver with intense cold. He traversed the street of Boudes and the street of Sæpo, crossed the Grass-Market, and reached the square of Khamon.

Henceforth he belonged to the priests. The slaves had just dispersed the crowd, and there was more space. Matho gazed about him, and his eyes encountered Salammbo.

With the first step he had taken she had risen to her feet; then, as he gradually drew near, she had little by little involuntarily approached the edge of the terrace; soon all outward things became blotted out, and she had eyes only for Matho. A silence had descended upon her soul—one of those unfathomable depths in which the whole world vanishes beneath the weight of a single thought, a memory, a look. And as the man drew near, he attracted her.

Save for his eyes he no longer bore any resemblance to a human being; he was but a tall figure, completely red; his broken bonds hung down, beside his thighs, indistinguishable from the fleshless tendons of his wrists; his mouth remained wide open; from his eye-sockets issued two flames which seemed to extend even to his hair; and still the miserable wretch walked on.

To the very foot of the terrace he came. Salammbo was leaning over the balustrade; it

## Matho

was upon her that those terrible eyeballs were fixed, and within her arose a consciousness of all that he had suffered for her sake. Though now he stood before her in the agonies of death, once more she saw him in his tent, upon his knees, with his arms about her waist and tender words coming brokenly from his lips; she would not have him die! At that moment a great shudder shook his frame, and she was on the point of screaming. He fell over backwards and ceased to move.

Salamambo, half swooning, was borne back to her throne by the priests who crowded around her. They congratulated her; it was her doing, and the people stamped and clapped their hands, shouting her name.

A man leapt upon the corpse. Though without a beard, he wore upon his shoulder the mantle of the priests of Moloch, and in his girdle the peculiar knife used to divide the sacred meats and terminating in a golden spatula at the end of the handle. At a single stroke he opened Matho's breast; then, tearing out the heart, placed it upon the spoon, and raising his arm aloft, Schahabarim offered it to the sun.

The sun was sinking beneath the waves; his rays fell like long arrows upon the crimson heart. As its palpitations grew feebler he plunged beneath the sea, and with its last beat he disappeared.

Then, from the gulf to the lagoon, from the isthmus to the beacon, from all the streets, from all the house-tops, from the roof of every temple, there went up a mighty shout, sometimes ceasing, then beginning again, making the buildings tremble,

## Salamambo

as though Carthage were convulsed by a spasm of titanic joy and boundless hope.

Nar Havas, intoxicated with pride, passed his left arm about Salamambo's waist in token of possession, and taking a golden cup in his right hand, drank to the genius of Carthage.

Salamambo, like her husband, rose with a cup in her hand, that she too might drink. But she sank down again, with her head bending over the back of the throne—pale, rigid, with open lips—her unbound hair sweeping the ground.

Thus died the daughter of Hamilcar because she had touched the mantle of Tanit.

## GLOSSARY

(The names of precious stones mentioned by Flaubert are not included. They are all taken from Pliny and Theophrastus, and, in many cases, it is no longer possible to identify them with those known to us.)

**Abadir.** Meteoric stone, worshipped by Phœnicians as divine  
**Algumin.** Red wood from Ophir.

**Amphora.** Large earthenware jar, with two handles.

**Baaras.** Plant, native to Mt. Lebanon, credited with marvelous properties.

**Baccar.** Plant, of which the root yielded a fragrant oil.

**Ballista.** Large military engine of the cross-bow type.

**Bekah.** Ancient Hebrew unit of weight: half a shekel.

**Bematist.** Official road-measurer under Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies.

**Beroar.** Calculous concretion found in the stomach of certain ruminants, and formerly regarded as an antidote to poisons and eruptive diseases.

**Cab.** Hebrew measure of capacity:  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an ephah, or 4 $\frac{1}{2}$  pints.

**Cantharus.** Wide drinking vessel with handles: a tankard.

**Cardamom.** *Alpinia Cardamomum.* A leguminous plant, with seeds of an aromatic flavour, used in medicine.

**Carob.** Used by Flaubert for the pod of the carob (tree, or St. John's bread tree (Arabic *Kharrobb*)).

**Carroballista.** Ballista mounted on a carriage.

**Cippi.** Literally, stakes or palisades.

**Cothurnus.** High boot or buskin, laced in front, reaching to the middle of the leg.

**Cottabus.** Sicilian game in vogue at drinking parties, consisting in throwing wine deftly into a metal basin.

# Glossary

**Dil Patēcl.** Phœnician deities of dwarfish shape. Their images also formed the figure-heads of ships.

**Electrum.** Alloy of four parts gold to one of silver.

**Ergastulum.** The slaves' prison attached to a private mansion.

**Galbanum.** Gum-resin obtained from species of *ferula* found in Persia.

**Garum.** Fish sauce made from small fish preserved in pickle.

**Glossopetra.** Tongue-shaped fossils; really the petrified teeth of fish.

**Gomor.** The Hebrew *Homer*: a measure of capacity containing 10 ephahs or  $11\frac{1}{2}$  bushels.

**Gourou nut.** Kola nut.

**Kābiri.** Divinities worshipped by the Pelasgians in Lemnos and Samothrace, and represented as dwarfs.

**Kesitah.** Hebrew gold coin, 4 shekels;  $\frac{1}{2}$  the weight of a sovereign.

**K'hommer.** Probably the Hebrew *Omer* =  $\frac{1}{6}$  of an ephah =  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a bushel.

**Kikar.** Hebrew term for a sum of 3,000 shekels.

**Kinnor.** Ancient triangular lyre of Syrian origin, consisting of two pieces of wood at right angles, with eight or nine strings stretched between them.

**Lama.** Species of antelope (*Ed. Def.*).

**Lattice-work** (p. 144). No other meaning seems possible for *feuilles de lattier noir*. *Lattier*, unknown elsewhere, appears to be a word coined by Flaubert.

**Lawsonia.** *Henna*. The Egyptians dyed their nails yellow with a paste made from the leaves.

**Malobathrum.** The aromatic leaf of the *betel* or *areca*.

**Mappalia.** Lat. *mapalia*, huts. Most authorities identify the quarter called Megara with Magalia, another form of *mapalia*; but Flaubert makes *les Mappales* a distinct quarter of the town.

**Metopion.** Aromatic Egyptian ointment.

**Nebel.** Phœnician harp. The "psaltery" of the Book of Psalms.

# Glossary

**Nopal.** Indian fig, of the genus *Cactus*.

**Onager.** Military engine operating like a sling.

**Orynge.** *Chevaux orynges* (p. 173), *étalon orynges* (p. 301).

Those responsible for the glossary to the *Édition Définitive* explain *orynge* as "probablement Oningis ou Oringis, ancienne ville de la Bétique," overlooking the passage in Oppian's *Cynegetica* where the word occurs. Flaubert undoubtedly took it from one of the French translators of Oppian, all of whom render *ὄρυγες* by *orynges*. The poet himself hazards two derivations of the word—

"Yet more, another lovely Sort are fam'd,  
Curiously dappled, and *Orynges* nam'd;  
Whether because in Mountain-Pastures bred,  
Or from their lust to mount the Marriage-Bed."

OPPIAN, *Cynegetica*, l. 317 (Mawer's translation).

The author of the *Cynegetica* describes at some length the two varieties of the breed, one being striped like a tiger, the other spotted like a leopard.

**Pilum.** The heavy javelin of the Roman infantry.

**Pratincole.** "Collared pratincole" seems the only possible meaning for *galeole à collier*. The word *galeole*—a climbing plant of Cochin-China—must have become confused in Flaubert's mind with *glardeole*, the genus to which the pratincole, of the plover family, belongs. The translator's thanks are due to Miller Christy, Esq., for this explanation.

**Psagdas.** This, a common Egyptian unguent, is probably what Flaubert intended by *psagus*.

**Salsalim.** A species of cymbals, yielding a high-pitched note.

**Sandastrum.** Mineral esteemed by Orientals as a precious stone; marked with yellow star-shaped spots.

**Sarissæ.** The long lance used by the Macedonian phalanx.

**Scheminiff.** This was probably a term for a bass accompaniment, rather than an eight-stringed harp as suggested by Flaubert.

**Scorpion.** Ancient military engine, a variety of the ballista.

**Sedil.** The hartwort or meadow saxifrage.



## Glossary

**Silphium.** *Laserpitium*, an umbelliferous plant, grown largely round Cyrene, the juice of which was used both in food and medicine.

**Simar.** A woman's long robe.

**Sistrum.** Metallic rattle used by Egyptians in the rites of Isis.

**Strobus.** A tree of *Carnania*, yielding an odoriferous gum.

**Syntagma.** Subdivision of the Greek phalanx, a square sixteen ranks deep.

**Synsitia.** *Les Syssites* is used by Flaubert for (1) the dining-clubs or messes, each of which was called a *συσίτια* (fem. sing.); (2) the *συσίτια* (neut. plur.), or halls in which they dined. The practice of taking meals in common was probably confined to the plutocracy.

**Thesmophorion.** Strictly, the temple of Demeter the Law-giver (*Θεσμοφώρας*). Flaubert's use of the term in the sense of a liturgy is doubtful.

**Velites (Lat.).** Soldiers without heavy defensive armour: skirmishers.

**Zeret.** Hebrew measure of length; perhaps half a cubit.

PRINTED BY  
WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LTD.  
PLYMOUTH











